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AFTER LITHOGRAPHS BY LOUIS HAGHE  
FROM DRAWINGS MADE ON THE SPOT BY

David Roberts R.A.

WITH HISTORICAL DESCRIPTIONS BY  
THE REV. GEORGE CHOLY, LL.D.

VOL. 3.



David Roberts, R.A.

TEMPLE OF EL-KHASNE. PETRA.

NEW YORK.  
D. APPLETON & CO. 346 & 348, BROADWAY





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## IDUMEA.

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THE illustration of prophecy gives a new and powerful interest to all ancient countries connected with the Scriptures. And, with the exception of the Holy Land, there is, perhaps, no portion of the East which supplies a more striking proof of the truth of prophecy than Idumea. If there ever was a region where the skill of man exerted all its powers to confer a character of indestructibility on the labours of man it was that spot on which stands PETRA. The City has not fallen, like Tyre and Babylon, into dust, and left its dwellers houseless. Its proudest portion remains in its original strength and size, almost in all its original grace and beauty, but the population have perished. The noble edifices which once stood in the midst of a flood of wealth, and were the creation of superabundant wealth, are there still, but the tide has ebbed away from their feet for ever. Human arts, so long and so richly lavished on those magnificent piles, have fled the soil; and through roads, once conveying the commerce alike of India and Italy to the storehouses of this superb city, no foot now passes but that of the Arab savage, or of the traveller hastening along, and regarding every man whom he meets as a robber and a homicide.

The fall of Edom had been pronounced by the Jewish prophets, while it was scarcely more than acquiring the shape of a state. As the restless enemy of Israel, it was the subject of Divine denunciation throughout the whole course of prophecy. Its punishments were successively proclaimed by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and Malachi. By Isaiah it seems to have been taken as the emblem of the whole heathen world, and to have thus been loaded with accumulated malediction. The cruelty and corruption, the reckless vanity and furious arrogance of the national temperament, were divinely sentenced, and the general ruin was marked as irretrievable.

“Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.”<sup>1</sup> “Thus saith the Lord God, I will stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman.”<sup>2</sup>

“The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee; thou that dwellest in the *clefts of*

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah, xlix. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel, xxv. 13.

*the rocks*, whose habitation is high. Shall I not destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the Mount of Esau? The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions, but there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau."<sup>1</sup>

Malachi, in closing the prophetic volume, fixes a remarkable and final interdict on the recovery of the nation: "I laid the mountain of Esau and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished; but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of Hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness."<sup>2</sup>

This weight of Divine wrath seems to have been especially heaped on Idumea (Edom) in consequence of its peculiar hostility to the chosen people. The territory had been in the possession of Esau, and his immediate descendants, who had driven out the Horites.<sup>3</sup> In the march of the people under Moses, when they demanded leave to pass along the chief road of the country, leading directly to Palestine, the Edomites fiercely refused, and the Israelites, who then were not commissioned to make war upon this prejudiced and inhospitable race, turned aside, and retracing their steps, were forced to make the circuit of the frontier.

The growing kingdom of Saul avenged those injuries, and probably many others by a war; and the more vigorous administration of David conquered the whole country. But in the troubled times which followed, the Edomites, enriched by commerce, and probably stimulated by the feebleness of the Jews, threw off the yoke, and fought them with varying fortune. At length the Syrian invasions of Israel prompted them to make more direct attacks, in which they carried off plunder and captives; until the hour of Jewish overthrow was ripe, and Edom was found joining the troops of Babylon.<sup>4</sup> In the Captivity, they even made an effort to master Palestine, and took possession of the country as far as Hebron; but were subsequently driven out by the valour of the Maccabees. The tide of conquest now recoiled, and Idumea itself was long governed by Jewish authorities.

The history of heathenism is the history of perpetual war. A new enemy from the Desert, the Nabathæi, or sons of Nebaioth, the son of Ishmael, suddenly invaded the southern border; and, changing their wandering habits for traffic and industry, became powerful. Within little more than a century (about 150 years before our era) they were in possession of the chief part of Edom. The capital had formerly been Bozrah; but Sela (a rock, *petra*) now became its principal city, and probably from the city was given the name of the region, *Petræa*.

The Idumeans were heard of once more in the siege of Jerusalem, when, entering the City in large bodies, they joined the factions, and added their violences to the sins and sufferings of the falling nation. The nominal independence of the kingdom continued for about thirty years after the fall of Jerusalem. In the reign of Trajan (A.D. 105) it was conquered and annexed to the Empire.

The position of Petra between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean poured into it the commerce which has always constituted national opulence; it became a great

<sup>1</sup> Obadiah.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis, xxxvi. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Malachi, i. 3, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel, xxv. 12. Obadiah.



deposit of Eastern wealth. The troops of Antigonus (B.C. 301), in a sudden attack on the city, found there large quantities of frankincense and myrrh, with five hundred talents of silver. Even the Roman conquest, by giving greater security to the country, largely augmented its commerce. One great road stretched from Ailah to Petra, and thence to Damascus. Another from Petra stretched to the west of the Lake Asphaltites, to Jerusalem, Askelon, and the general coast of the Mediterranean. The incursions of the Desert tribes were kept at bay by Roman stations, and in some instances by Roman towns founded along the road.

Though the region was remarkably mountainous, the palm-groves, and the romantic beauty of the country, were well known to the Roman poets, with whom, however, Idumea was a general name for Palestine,

“*Primus Idumeas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas.*” VIRG. G. iii.

In the fifth century, *Palestina Tertia* comprehended the countries east and south of the Dead Sea. On the erection of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem at the Council of Chalcedon, the three Palestines formed its territory.<sup>1</sup>

But a formidable change was to break down at once the religion and the prosperity of the land. A.D. 630, Mahomet invaded the country.<sup>2</sup> The formation of the Mahometan kingdoms of Syria, Arabia, and Egypt, destroyed the traffic of Idumea. The roads were neglected, the population perished, and the land was abandoned to the savage and the wilderness.<sup>3</sup> In the twelfth century, the Crusaders under Baldwin I. made expeditions through the interior; but in 1183, they were finally expelled by Saladin.<sup>4</sup> From this period Petra was unknown to Europeans for six centuries. At length Volney, in his Syrian narrative (about 1785), told, as an Arab rumour, that on the south of the Dead Sea there were more than thirty ruined towns. In 1806, Seetzen passed round the south end of the Dead Sea, but without reaching Edom. In 1812, Burckhardt explored the Wady Mousa (Valley of Moses). The country has been since largely explored by Laborde, Robinson, and other intelligent travellers.

<sup>1</sup> Reland, quoted by Robinson, ii. 563.

<sup>3</sup> Ritter, *Gesch.* 209.

<sup>2</sup> Abulf. Ann. Moham. i. 171.

<sup>4</sup> Gauf. Vinisauf, quoted by Robinson, ii. 568.

## TEMPLE OF EL KHASNÈ, PETRA.

### VIGNETTE ON THE TITLE-PAGE

THIS view of the Temple of El Khasnè, in Petra, marks its singular locality. It is thus seen in front of the traveller on his way through the ravine which leads into the inclosed valley of Petra, and nothing can be more striking than its effect upon the spectator who has not yet emerged from the deep gorge of the Wady Mousa. The rock in which the Temple is cut seems to close the gorge and limit all further progress, like a *cul-de-sac*; but the stream which runs onward through the narrow ravine turns in its course to the right, and is joined by a small torrent from the left, at the base of the Temple El Khasnè; thence, flowing to the right, it enters the open valley which is filled by the wonders of this extraordinary place. The rocks on either side of the narrow ravine by which the city is approached are steeply escarped to a great height; in the sides the openings to numerous tombs may be seen, though many more are concealed by luxuriant shrubs, among which the rich blooming oleander is distinguished. Mr. Roberts is of opinion that these excavations, though now apparently inaccessible, were dwellings in the rocks,<sup>1</sup> and not tombs as Laborde supposes, and the apostrophe of Jeremiah seems to confirm this:—"O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill," &c.

This Temple El Khasnè is not only very beautiful and one of the most striking in Petra, from its situation when seen by the traveller as he advances into the ravine, but the living rock from which it is excavated rising above it to the height of hundreds of feet, whilst the view in every other direction is limited to a few feet in width, oppressively affects the mind and prepares it for the wonderful objects and scenes disclosed in the valley beyond and throughout this, one of the most remarkable places on earth, whether considered in its physical characters or as a sublime verification of the denunciations against it made by the prophets of Holy Writ.

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

## ARABS OF THE DESERT.

THE principal figure is Besharah, an intelligent native of the Beni Said tribe, who accompanied Mr. Roberts from Egypt to Mount Sinai and Akaba.<sup>1</sup>

The dress of all the Arab tribes who were met with on the route to Petra is nearly the same. Where the person is of rank, as in the present instance, the turban is worn; but in general, a kerchief of gay colours, folded diagonally, is bound round the head by a fillet of dark worsted, or a cord, leaving the corners to fall over the neck and shoulders. A coarse shirt, with loose sleeves, hanging to the knee, is gathered round the waist by a leathern girdle; over this is worn a large mantle of woollen stuff, striped in bands of white and brown. The legs and feet are generally without covering, but some wear sandals of fish-skin. They are all armed with a broad, crooked knife, about eighteen inches long, and a matchlock gun of the rudest construction.

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.









London, Published Decr 15<sup>th</sup> 1855, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

ARABS OF THE DESERT.











London, Published Dec<sup>r</sup> 1855, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

EL-DEIR, PETRA.

Daniel Roberts R.A.





## EL DEIR.

THE general view of Petra strikes every traveller with admiration. Even the least enthusiastic break out into the language of astonishment. But an artist is the most natural describer of the picturesque, and Mr. Roberts's pen brings the chief objects before the eye with a clearness and truth only second to his pencil. The following are extracts from his Journal:—

“March 6, 1839. We encamped in the centre of this extraordinary City. I did not expect to be much surprised at Petra, after seeing Thebes. But the whole is far beyond any idea which I had formed of it, in both magnitude and situation. The entire valley is strewn with ruins; the architecture a combination of the Egyptian with the Greek and Roman. Its beauty grew on the eye. . . .

“I am more and more bewildered with the aspect of this extraordinary City. Not only the City, which must be two miles in length by nearly the same in breadth, but every ravine has been inhabited, even to the tops of the mountains. The valley has been filled up with public buildings, temples, triumphal arches, and bridges, all of which, with the exception of one triumphal arch and one temple, are prostrate. Even of this temple the portico has fallen. Those of the buildings (or rather excavations in the rock) which remain are rent by time, excepting the Khasnè, which probably owes its preservation to the narrowness of the defile, and the deep recess in which it is situated. . . .

“To-day, accompanied by a guard of Arabs, we wound our way up a steep ravine; a broken staircase extending the whole ascent, which was nearly a mile. We at length reached the object of our journey, which was a building rarely visited, called El Deir (the Convent). It is hewn out of the face of the rock, and is of greater magnitude than the Khasnè, being upwards of 100 feet in height. The capitals of the columns and the cornices are in the rough block, the details never having been finished. In the interior, facing the entrance, is a recess, with a platform ascended by two flights of steps, in the centre of which once stood an Altar, the place where it joined the wall being distinctly visible; and over it is painted a Cross, showing that it has been used as a Christian Church.

“Opposite, and on the summit of a high rock, are the ruins of what has been a magnificent temple; the bases of the portico and colonnade on each side remain, with the Adytum, hewn out of the solid rock, and containing a beautiful ornamented recess. In a vault underneath, is a capital of one of the columns, in white marble, and in the best taste.

“El Deir stands a thousand feet above the level of the City. The view from this spot is magnificent, commanding a great extent of the valley of El Ghor; Mount Hor, with the supposed Tomb of Aaron crowning its summit; and the whole of the defile leading to the edifice, which is of the most romantic description, winding among perpendicular rocks,



which turn the head giddy to look upon; while the site of the City itself is seen in all its extent below. Though the ruins of this extraordinary place are immense, they sink into insignificance when compared with these stupendous rocks. I often threw aside my pencil, in despair of being able to convey any idea of the scene.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

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## ENCAMPMENT OF THE ALLOEEN IN WADY ARABA.

THE northern part of this Wady is supposed to be the Valley of Zin. The road traverses narrow sandy ravines, bounded by vast crags of calcareous rock. Solitude is sometimes grand and awful; but here it is alternately melancholy and startling. The walls of rock rise like the walls of some vast place of incarceration, but frequently torn and split into the most rugged forms by earthquakes or the elements. It is the “frowning wilderness.” But this gradually improves, and the wild goat and partridge are sometimes to be seen: still the blaze of the sun is fiery; the light reflected from the rocks is blinding; breathing is painful, and thirst rapidly becomes feverish and intolerable.

A late intelligent traveller<sup>1</sup> has remarked, that it is impossible to look around on the ghastly and almost unearthly desolation of this scene, without feeling that the trials of the Israelites were far greater than we had ever before imagined.” But admitting this, it gives only an additional proof of the fitness of the Desert for the discipline; while, by the Divine supply of food and water, the chief perils of the Desert were obviated. The purpose was to make a *new* people; and where could this purpose be more directly accomplished than in a vast and solitary region, into which civilized life could not enter, and where all the old habits of the people necessarily died away?

<sup>1</sup> Kinnear, Cairo, Petra, &c. 67.







London. Published Jan 7<sup>th</sup> 1856 by Day & Son, Great Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

ENCAMPMENT OF THE ALLOEEN IN WADY-ARABÁ.











London Published Jan 7<sup>th</sup> 1856, by Day & Son, Gate Street, St. Martin's Lane Fields.

EL KHASNEH, PETRA





## EL KHASNÈ.

THE first object which meets the eye on the approach to Petra is a range of red sandstone cliffs, apparently impenetrable; but the brook which flows into the centre of the City passes through a narrow cleft, hidden behind a projection of the rock. Here is the opening of the extraordinary chasm, which anciently formed the only avenue to the City on this side. This is the Sik of Wady Mousa (the Valley of Moses).

The whole chasm exhibits the traces of a people lavish of ornament. A few steps beyond the entrance, a light and lofty arch crosses it, with niches sculptured in the rock beneath, probably once intended for the reception of statues. The passage varies from 12 to 40 feet; the sides are perpendicular, rising from 80 to 250 feet, and sometimes almost shutting out the sky. The fissure continues to descend, and the brook, which flows through its whole distance, fills it with vegetation; oleanders crowd it; wild figs and tamarisks start from the crevices of the rock, and it is festooned with creeping plants. The sides of the chasm exhibit continually the indefatigable taste and labour of this people of sculptors. Niches for statues, and tablets, evidently for bas-reliefs and inscriptions, are cut in the rock, and the greater part of the whole passage must have exhibited the appearance of a statue-gallery. To the stranger entering by this path, when Petra was in its day of power, the sudden contrast between the savage dreariness of the Desert, and the luxurious beauty and various magnificence of the City, with both its beauty and magnificence animated by the multitude from all regions, which then crowded its streets, its temples, and its theatres, must have been more like the work of magic than of man.

The entrance winds much, and other large fissures open from the sides, thus varying this most singular avenue. "The character of this wonderful spot, and the impression which it makes," says a writer, by no means idly addicted to emotion,<sup>1</sup> "is utterly indescribable. I had visited the strange sandstone caves and streets of Adersbach, and wandered with delight through the romantic dells of the Saxon Switzerland. But they exhibit few points of comparison. All here is on a grander scale. We lingered along this superb approach, forgetful of everything else, and taking no note of time. The length is a long mile; we were forty minutes in passing through it in this desultory manner."

The Sik terminates in a broader chasm, opening at right angles with it, and passing to the north-west. From this point the most perfect and beautiful relic of the City bursts upon the view—the Khasnè (the treasure), a name given to it by the Arabs, from a tradition that it contains the treasure of Pharaoh, to whom they attribute the building of all extraordinary things.

The Khasnè strikes all eyes, and the advantage of its position, which has greatly

<sup>1</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, ii. 518.

protected it from the effect of time, presents it in almost the perfection of its first day. It is universally acknowledged to be exquisitely beautiful, and to produce a more powerful impression than any surviving monument even of Greece or Rome. Its style wants classic purity, but the elegance of the general effect makes errors in detail trivial. The stone is of a rich rose colour: the symmetry of its façade is perfect; its preservation is almost complete. But the whole skill of the architect seems to have been devoted to the first impression. The interior is narrow and simple; from the vestibule the door opens into a plain, lofty room, excavated in the rock; behind this is another smaller, and small lateral chambers open from the large room and vestibule. Was this a Temple or a Tomb? The general opinion is that it was the former. Yet would a Temple be placed in the very rush and torrent of public life, or in a chasm which scarcely allowed space for the access of the worshipper, and almost prohibited the forms of sacrifice? But it stands in a valley of tombs, and is only more stately than them all. If the genius of a splendid City, a thousand years past away, could be enshrined, the memory of the loveliness and grandeur of Petra could not have been transmitted by a nobler Mausoleum.

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## ANCIENT WATCH-TOWER.

THIS tower is a striking object, from its position on an overhanging mass of rock, rising abruptly from the plain, on the left of the ravine by which Petra is approached through its mountain barrier. Widely overlooking the Valleys of El Ghor and Akaba, it appears to have been one of a chain of posts, or of signal towers surrounding the City; an important and customary precaution in countries so liable to invasion.

The tower is hewn out of the solid rock, and contains two chambers, but entirely plain, and without inscription or memorial of any kind.

Robinson observed similar structures in this quarter. Keeping on directly towards the middle pass, Es-Sufah, near the foot of the mountain, he came to the ruins of a small post or castle of hewn stones. It was obviously intended to guard the pass.<sup>1</sup> The Artist, on leaving Petra by another route, saw the foundations of other towers of the same kind, and apparently intended to keep up a chain of communication. This chain could be traced nearly to Hebron, particularly in crossing the high ridge called Nukb al Sujah.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, ii. 590.

<sup>2</sup> Roberts's *Journal*.









London, Published Feb'y 1<sup>st</sup> 1846 by J. W. & J. Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields

ANCIENT WATCH-TOWER.











London, Published Jan<sup>y</sup> 1856, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields

LOWER PORTION OF EL KHASNE, PETRA.





## THE LOWER PORTION OF EL KHASNÈ.

THIS view partially gives the profile of El Khasnè. The general architecture is Greek, but mingled with the luxurious fancy and exuberant decoration of Asia; the whole giving the impression of singular energy in the national taste, which could encounter such difficulties, yet surmount them with such success, and combine its triumph over the rudest forms of nature with such refinement of beauty.

Four Corinthian columns, thirty-five feet in height and three in diameter, supporting an entablature or pediment richly ornamented, compose the portico. On each flank stands a pilaster, and in the space between it and the last column is a colossal equestrian group in alto relievo. The entablature is ornamented with vases, connected by festoons of flowers, and in the centre of the pediment stands an eagle with expanded wings. The superstructure is more fanciful. It consists of a small circular temple, surrounded with Corinthian pillars, and flanked by two smaller temples of the same order. On the centre one stands the urn from which the building derives its Arab name, the Treasure, as the natives imagine it to contain the gold of Pharaoh, and frequently fire at it, in the hope of fracturing the depository. All the friezes and capitals are very richly sculptured.<sup>1</sup>

The steps to the portico are broken, and covered with grass and wild flowers. One column has been thrown down, and the *relievi* and statues are much decayed; but such is the magnitude of its general scale, and such is its grace, that those defects scarcely strike the eye. The fine colour of the stone, which is a rich rose, and the singular preservation of its most delicate carvings, give it the appearance of having been erected but yesterday.

If the Khasnè owes some of its effect to the suddenness with which it bursts upon the sight, and the contrast which its fanciful design and the freshness of its colour form with the rugged and stern aspect of the surrounding precipices; yet are we not to regard even those circumstances as evincing the singular skill of the designers? The effect is described as fascinating. "The idea of it," says Robinson, "was uppermost in my mind during the day and all the night. In the morning I returned, and beheld it with increased admiration. There it stands as it has stood for ages, in beauty and loneliness. Its rich roseate tints, as I bade it farewell, were lighted up and gilded by the beams of the morning sun, and I turned from it at length with an impression which will be effaced only by death."<sup>2</sup>

The Artist's farewell to the City touchingly and naturally expresses the influence of the scene:—

"The Camels were loaded, and our caravan was in motion. I repeatedly turned

<sup>1</sup> Kinnear, Cairo, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Biblical Researches, ii. 519.



to look on this doomed City; so sad a memorial of Divine judgment, yet possessed of a strength which must have scorned all human instruments of destruction; placed in the bosom of impenetrable mountains, with walls so formed by nature, that to them the works of man shrank into insignificance. Though in the midst of deserts, its climate is not surpassed by any in salubrity; the soil watered by numerous streams and its mountains cultivated to the very summits; the plain below covered with the most splendid temples, and other public buildings, and the rocks themselves so filled with excavations that they resound under the foot. Yet with all this, and with a population of hundreds of thousands, all now is loneliness; its history is almost unknown, and the wandering Arab attributes its very existence to enchantment.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

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## THE ARCH CROSSING THE RAVINE.

NEAR the mouth of the chasm El Sik, an Arch, at a considerable height, connects the rocks on either side. Time has destroyed whatever evidence might have existed of its actual purpose, and the question now is, whether it was formed for ornament, for defence, or for simple communication. But with that fondness for decoration which seems to have neglected no opportunity of exhibiting itself, the portion below the Arch is excavated into niches, which, it may be presumed, contained statues, possibly idols, the protecting deities of this extraordinary city. Some remains of a gateway, or barrier built of large square stones, show that the security of the entrance was intrusted to more sufficient guardians.

Petra, though deserted, is not untrodden; a rude and infrequent traffic passes through it still; and it happened, that while the Artist was employed on this sketch, a caravan from Gaza, consisting of forty camels on their way to Mâan on the Damascus road, passed through the ravine.







Printed and Published Feb 7<sup>th</sup> 1856 by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields

THE ARCH ACROSS THE RAVINE, PETRA.











Engraved by J. G. Thompson, 1856, by Day & Son, Great Britain, London, in Field.

PETRA. SHOWING THE UPPER OF EASTERN END OF THE VALLEY





## THE EASTERN END OF THE VALLEY.

IN advancing towards the termination of the valley, two masses of sculpture peculiarly attract the eye. One, the more distant in the present view, resembling the Khasnè, but having eight Corinthian pillars. The edifice in front is of larger dimensions, and has four entrances, adorned by pilasters and ornaments in the florid style. A part of the work has fallen down, probably in some earthquake, but it still has four stories, with a row of fourteen pilasters extending across each of the three upper ones. Only three pilasters of the highest tier, however, remain. The excavations within form four apartments; but they are totally destitute of decoration, and they all contain simple recesses, of whose purpose nothing distinct is known. Travellers have, in general, pronounced them "*either* temples or tombs." But while this indecision lasts, there still is room for conjecture; and the writer of these pages conceives, that their primary purpose was *neither*. That places of public worship should be formed in the face of cliffs, some a thousand feet above the City, and almost inaccessible to the frequent approach of the people; without the space in front, or the depth within, which were essential to all ancient worship, whether Eastern or Western, seems improbable; and that these places of worship should be multiplied almost in every direction seems equally improbable. We are to remember also, that the actual City was *below*, in a valley of two miles every way, where we still discover vestiges of the public buildings. It is in this extensive area that we are naturally to look for the site of edifices so important, and in such constant public use, as the temples of heathenism.

The opinion now offered is, that the majority of those sculptured excavations were for the sole purpose of gratifying the eye; a noble indulgence of the national taste for ornament, a natural and fine employment of the superfluous wealth of an active and opulent people compressed within a boundary, narrow but singularly adapted for the most novel and magnificent decoration. In other sites, the wealth of cities flows into the surrounding landscape. But Petra saw round it only a circle of cliffs, from three hundred to a thousand feet high; those cliffs rugged, and forming the strongest contrast to the profuse elegance of an Oriental City, reared by the richest traffic in the world. The Citizens, unable to pass beyond their barrier, converted it into beauty; exchanged the wildness of its rocks for resemblances of the most graceful and stately architecture; and thus surrounded themselves with that picturesque, singular, and richly-embellished scenery, which, to this hour, excites the admiration of mankind.

Nor is it necessary to the conception, that this embellishment should have begun in any public design of the community. An unemployed architect, finding an easily wrought material, open to all, might have naturally adopted it to display his ability, in a position conspicuous to every eye. An opulent and childless citizen might have

thus exhibited his taste, or transmitted his memory. The example set by individual caprice might have been followed by public munificence. The habits of ancient times were highly favourable to the conjecture. The want of those innumerable channels by which superfluous wealth finds its productive discharge in our day; the local pride of small commonwealths; the love of public decoration congenial to climates where nothing decays, and where the population live in the open air; and the actual existence of the finest monuments of the ancient world in their unmutilated beauty, naturally stimulated the popular spirit to respond to a call so deep as that uttered by the stupendous grandeur of the rocks of Petra.

That some of those excavations may, in after ages, have been used as temples or tombs is perfectly possible. That they may have been used as dwellings is probable, for such is the course of a declining state; pauperism readily takes refuge in a shelter which costs it nothing. But that the original and general purpose was the gratification of public taste—the expenditure of national means on the most striking and splendid national ornament, and the conversion of a rude and savage circumvallation into a circle of the most superb imagery of Europe and Asia; if but a conjecture, is one not unsuitable to the incomparable effect before the eye, to the striking locality, or the operation of a people of genius and power.

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## TOMB OF AARON, SUMMIT OF MOUNT HOR.

AMONG the hills in the approach to Petra, the most striking is Mount Hor, from its boldness and height, and still more, from its connexion with Scripture. The ascent to the supposed Tomb of Aaron, which stands on its brow, occupies about an hour, and in its latter portion is extremely steep, often requiring to be climbed on the hands and knees. In many parts, where it would have been otherwise impracticable, the steepness is relieved by flights of stairs. The upper clefts of the mountain are enriched with a large growth of juniper and other shrubs; and on the summit is a grotto, in which a kind of Arab hermit dwelt for forty years, the greater part within the present century. He has lately died and seems to have had no successor.

The Tomb is alluded to prior to the Crusades; it is in a vault, and for preservation it has long been enclosed in a building similar to a Mahometan Saint's Sepulchre. An iron grating once protected it from the unhallowed touch, but it has been broken down, and all may now approach. The visitors, however, are compelled to descend into the vault with naked feet; an embarrassing necessity, in a place which may naturally be supposed to breed vipers and scorpions. It is still much resorted to by the Christian pilgrims, and is held in veneration even by the Mahometan.









*Daniel Roberts, R.A.*

London, Published Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> 1856, by Day & Son, Gt. Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

TOMB OF AARON, SUMMIT OF MOUNT HOR.











London, Published Jan<sup>y</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> 1836, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

THE THEATRE, PETRA.





## THE THEATRE.

THIS view exhibits another of the wonders of Petra. The Stream of Wady Mousa, here turning to the south, enters a ravine gradually narrowing. The cliffs are perforated, as usual, with numberless excavations; but the largest labour of this order, and the one which most directly meets the eye on entering the City from the eastward, is the Theatre. Its form, parts, and dimensions, are still ascertainable. The diameter of the Podium is 120 feet,<sup>1</sup> the number of rows of seats is 33, and of the Cunei 3; and as the benches are capable of containing about 100 persons each, the entire would thus give room for upwards of 3000. Behind the upper bench runs a narrow corridor. The Scena was built, and not excavated; the whole, therefore, has fallen. But the bases of four columns remain on its interior face. All the rest was hewn out of the living rock. Above the highest row of the seats are small chambers excavated in the cliff. The Theatre fronts the east-north-east. From the upper or southern front is obtained, perhaps, the most striking view in the whole valley. The opposite or eastern cliff, as it here skirts the track, is low; while above it, farther back, is another higher precipice, extending towards the north.<sup>2</sup>

The Engraving affords a view of the general height of the cliffs enclosing the Ravine which leads to the City. Its entrance and its termination were alike defended by small fortresses formed in the rock, but now ruined by earthquakes. Immediately facing the Ravine, and on the left of the spectator, is a rock, formerly crowned by a circular Monument, of which but the lower portion remains.<sup>3</sup> The ancients knew the power of first impression, and in all their cities seem to have studied to render the entrance most impressive. But the site of their City supplied the Petræans with singular advantages, which they employed to the utmost. In entering Petra on this side, the eye of the stranger was met by a succession of objects the most novel, bold, and striking. He first saw this Monument, probably a noble tower, suspended above his head. He next saw the Theatre, an immense work of wealth and labour, which though now reduced to the simple excavation of the seats, we may justly suppose to have possessed the pillar and the portico, with every decoration which could embellish the most favoured resort of a splendid people. Above both Monument and Theatre, he followed both excavations of the richest and most fantastic style, ascending to the summit of the cliffs, and those cliffs themselves exhibiting the hues of painted scenery on the most colossal scale. Even now, in all its desolation, all is beautiful. Nature has hung the rocks with prodigal and glowing vegetation; where the sculptured ornament has mouldered away, the shrub and the flower have partially supplied its loss,—have festooned the cliff, and coloured and tissue the ruin.

<sup>1</sup> Irby and Mangles.

<sup>2</sup> Biblical Researches, ii. 521.

<sup>3</sup> Roberts's Journal.



## MOUNT HOR, FROM THE CLIFFS ENCIRCLING PETRA.

THIS view was taken from a great height. On the evening previous to his entering Petra, the Artist scaled one of the hills, which promised to give him a glimpse of the great object of his journey. But on reaching the summit, he found himself in the midst of a region of hills. His disappointment was amply repaid by the general scene. The view was magnificent, commanding El Ghor and the Wady Arabah, while above him towered the naked majesty of Mount Hor, and around and beneath lay the rocks of Mount Seir, bathed in the splendours of an Eastern sunset.<sup>1</sup>

But an interest more powerful than any which can arise from mere beauty or grandeur of landscape is connected with the scene. It is impossible to forget, that on this spot was transacted one of the most solemn events of Scripture; that in the ravines and plains immediately surrounding the spectator, the Camp of Israel was pitched; that on the wild declivity before the eye, trod the leader of the chosen people, ascending to be present at the death which was so significant of his own; and that on its summit, and in the sight of the assembled nation, the first high-priest of Israel surrendered his office and passed to glory.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers xx.







London. Published Jan'y 15<sup>th</sup> 1856 by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

MOUNT HOR, FROM THE CLIFFS ENCIRCLING PETRA











David Roberts, R. A.

London, Published Jan'y 18<sup>th</sup> 1856, by Day & Son, Gate St. — in oils. Im. Pict. It.

REMAINS OF A TRIUMPHAL ARCH AT PETRA





## RUINS OF A TRIUMPHAL ARCH.

IT is to be remembered that against Petra itself the Divine denunciation has been explicitly fulfilled. The whole area of the valley is a bed of ruins. The "line of confusion and the stones of emptiness" are scarcely more than the obvious expression for the havoc of the actual City. Though the fabrics, such as they were, formed from the rocks, are nearly indestructible, and will excite the wonder of many a future age,—Bozrah has become "a desolation, a waste and a curse."

The Arch-way in the Engraving, in the lower Roman style, is little more than a heap of stones. There appears to have been a central arch with two side ones, opening upon the esplanade which extended from the Theatre to the Doric edifice immediately under the rock of the Acropolis. In front a bridge, of which a portion remains, crossed the stream. On the hill are considerable ruins of temples and other public buildings, and portions of the esplanade still sweep round its base.<sup>1</sup>

Among the relics of the Arch lies a large stone, bearing a figure with expanded wings, which probably occupied a place on the Arch. From the pilasters and the fragments scattered round, the whole structure seems to have been loaded with ornament.<sup>2</sup> This profusion, and the Greco-Roman character of the sculptured fronts in various instances, render it more than probable that the City was the object of considerable decoration by its Western masters, from the second century, when it first became a Roman province. But the Roman style was unfit to mingle with the Petræan. Both were lavish of ornament; but the former was often lavish without luxuriance and costly without grandeur. The latter, alike from the magnitude of its scale and scene, was never rich without being superb nor simple without being sublime.

The fulfilment of the prophecy does not require that this extraordinary and once beautiful City should be either wholly untrodden by man, or a place of unexampled horror. The denunciation which condemns it to eternal flame<sup>3</sup> seems to regard it only as a general representative of heathen blasphemy. But the peculiar allusions to its fall are perfectly compatible with a certain degree of habitancy. The Fellaheen, or Arabs, who haunt its cliffs and chasms, amount to several hundreds. It is not wholly destitute of quadrupeds; the camel is everywhere in Arabia, and the wild goat browses among its recesses; the eagle soars above its coloured pinnacles; partridges and pigeons wing the lower air; the note of the blackbird, and many of the smaller songsters, is heard; and in the season of flowers the sheltered chasms and the sides of the rocks are covered with bloom and filled with fragrance. But the inhabitants are the savage and the robber, and civilization is gone for ever.

"Hear the counsel of the Lord that He hath taken against Edom; and his purposes,

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> Kinnear, 150.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah xxxiv.

that He hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely He shall make their habitations desolate with them. The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry the noise thereof was heard in the Red Sea. Behold, He shall come up as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah, xlix. 20-22.

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### CONFERENCE OF ARABS.

THE Engraving gives a conception of the manner in which the more serious affairs of the natives are conducted. A party of the Fellaheen Arabs had come armed, to demand their share of the piastres which had been paid by the Artist and his fellow-travellers for protection; a violent altercation ensued, and 150 piastres were obtained from their former extortioner, “old Abed, who pulled the money from his bosom, and dashing it on the ground, cursed them and their fathers to the lowest depths of Jehennem,” (Gehenna).<sup>1</sup>

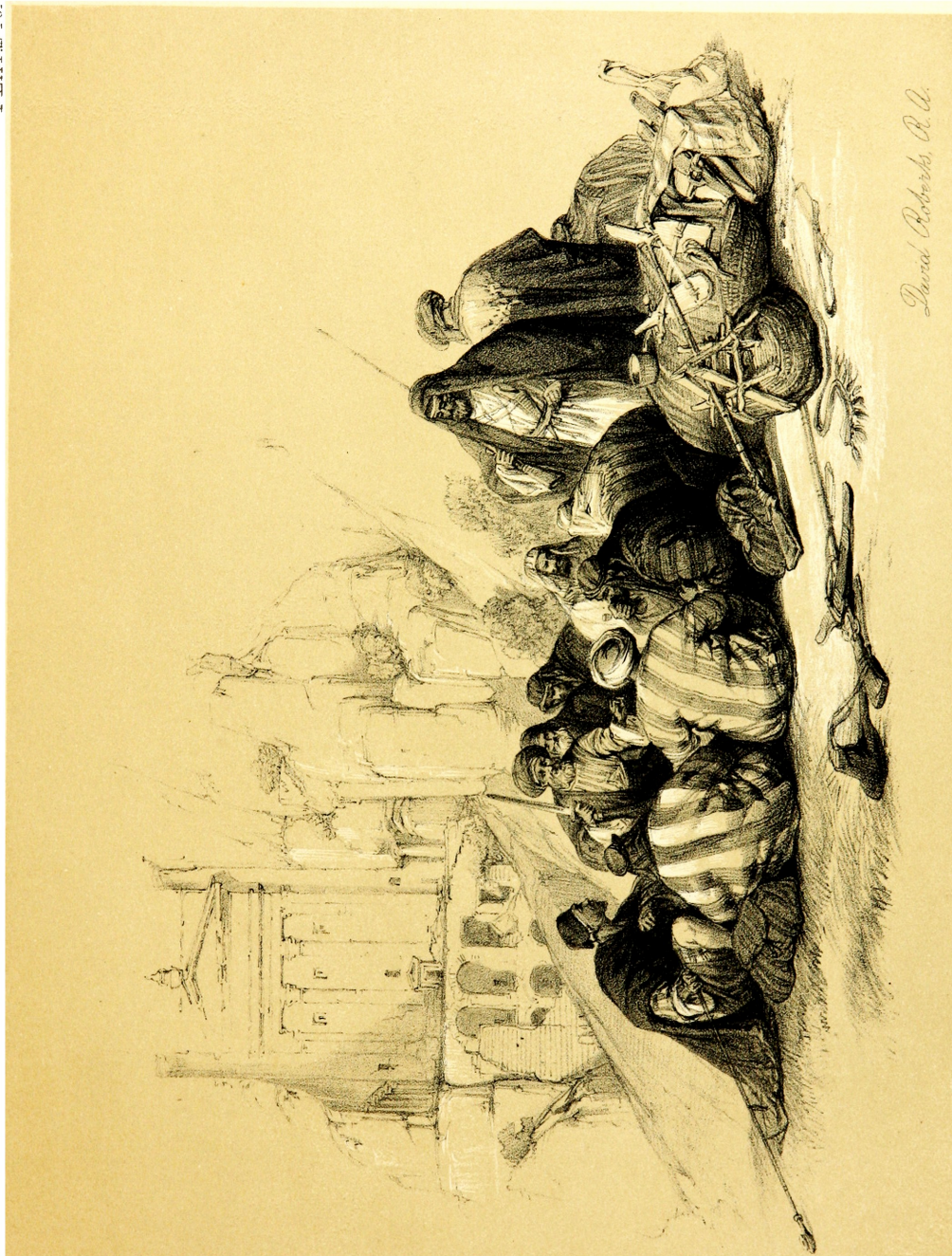
To this succeeded a scene curiously contrasted in its quiet and formality. One of the Fellaheen was charged with having stolen an ass, and the three sheiks were called on to give judgment in the case. The whole party now seated themselves on the ground, and old Abed, who had just divided spoil with such angry reluctance, “opened the court” with great gravity, by reciting a part of the introductory chapter of the Koran, and what seemed some of the Bedouin laws; all which was listened to in silence and with great attention. While speaking, he held a drawn sword in his hand. When he concluded, the sword was taken up by another speaker, and another, and so on, none attempting to interrupt the holder of the sword. When the decision was given, the Fellaheen suddenly and quietly disappeared among the rocks.

<sup>1</sup> Kinnear, Cairo and Petra. Roberts's Journal.









David Roberts, R.A.

Engraved by Day & Son, 15, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

CONFERENCE OF ARABS











London Published Jan<sup>y</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> 1846 by Long & Son, Gate Street, Ludlow, Sh<sup>rs</sup> Fields

THE ACROPOLIS (KUSR FAR ON) LOWER END OF THE VALLEY





## THE KUSR FARON.

THIS gives the central view of the City. On the right lie the ruins of the Triumphal Arch, whose site was near the brook, and fronting to the east. Its style is florid and corrupt. It seems to have formed the approach to the Palace, or pile of building in the centre, called by the Arabs Kusr Faron (Pharaoh's Castle). Its age is dubious, but it has the distinction of being the only structure of mason-work now standing in the valley. Joists of wood are, in different parts, let in among the courses of stone, intended, doubtless, to receive the fastenings for ornaments of stone or stucco. The walls are chiefly entire, but the columns of the northern front, which were composed of separate pieces, are gone. The distribution of the interior into chambers and stories shows that it was not a temple. This edifice, even in its dismantled state, has an interest, from its probably supplying some idea of the general architecture of the larger buildings of Petra. South of the Kusr stands a lone pillar, the last of a temple, of whose other pillars the fragments lie scattered around. Those objects are the only relics in the midst of a great tract of ruins. The course of the brook, when it has emerged from the Chasm, is through a strip of level land, on the north and south of which the ground rises into irregular eminences, and those again backed by a steeper ascent. It is this lower tract, half a mile square, which formed the actual circuit of the original City; the access being open on the north and south, where, however, we may presume that it was defended by walls, and the east and west being shut in by the cliffs, and capable of being approached only by the "Chasms."<sup>1</sup> The site was thus "an area in the bosom of a mountain, swelling into mounds, and intersected with gullies, but the whole ground of such a nature as might be conveniently built upon, and with neither ascent nor descent inconveniently steep."

The whole area was once evidently occupied with buildings. Along the immediate edge of the stream, its wintry violence has cleared away the ruins; but higher up, the whole space on both sides is covered with foundations and fragments. The stones are hewn, and the houses must have been solid and well built. They cover a space perfectly capable of accommodating thirty or forty thousand inhabitants.

To the left of the Kusr Faron is the rock which Laborde regards as the site of the Acropolis. The conjecture is probable, from the commanding position of the rock, and from the known habit of ancient nations to have a place of strength in the midst of their cities. But there is no further evidence. The crag is now inaccessible, though this does not preclude ascent in more ancient times. The Artist thinks that he discovered fragments of building on its summit.<sup>3</sup>

The rising ground on the left and front is covered with ruins

<sup>1</sup> Biblical Researches, ii. 523.

<sup>2</sup> Irby and Mangels.

<sup>3</sup> Roberts's Journal.



All the impressions created by the general aspect of this City are characteristic and forcible. The choice of the site may have been natural to a people desirous of security in ages of violence; for such a position, defended by resolute men, must have been impregnable. The sublimity was the work of Nature; but the taste, the labour, and the ornament, were the work of man. "The most striking feature" is not so much in the existence of any one work of surpassing stateliness, as in their multitude, in the unwearied variety of such labours along the whole extent of the perpendicular rocks adjacent to the main area, and throughout the lateral valleys and chasms, the entrances of many of which are decorated with every imaginable style of architecture; many more, probably, remaining to reward the research of travellers in safer times.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Biblical Researches, ii. 529.

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## EXCAVATIONS AT THE EASTERN END OF THE VALLEY.

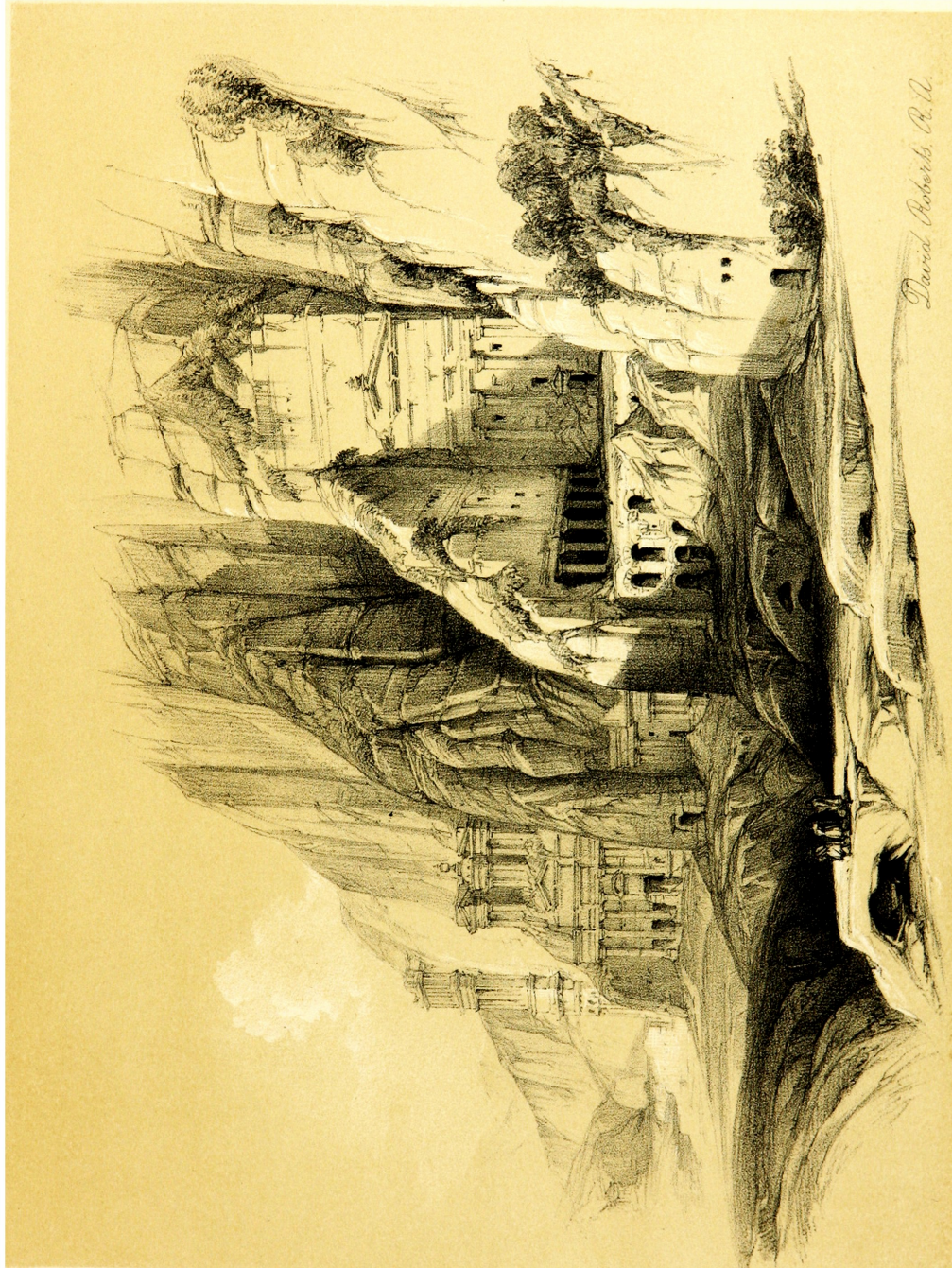
THE cliff opposite to the Theatre is largely excavated, but among those works the one given in the Vignette is of superior design and preservation. The front presents an entablature and pediment, supported by four columns, and surmounted with an urn. The entrance is about twelve feet from the ground, and recedes considerably within the cliff, the rock extending fifteen feet forward on each side. The rock is on each side also hewn into an open gallery, supported by five pillars, two tiers of built arches supporting the ground between the colonnades, which thus forms a kind of terrace in front of the entrance.<sup>1</sup>

The architects of Petra had evidently a strong sense of beauty. Their choice of position, in all their more elaborate designs, is always admirable. The view from the platform in front of those edifices, whatever might have been their purpose, must have been most captivating. The City, in its pomp and animation below; the surrounding cliffs, in every variety of form and colour, and the whole seen through an atmosphere without a stain, and under a heaven without a cloud, must have formed a combination altogether unrivalled.

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.







David Roberts. R.A.

Imam Abdallah Pasha's Residence, 1856, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

EXCAVATIONS AT THE EASTERN END OF THE VALLEY, PETRA.











London, Published Feb/1856, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincolns Inn Fields.

THE RAVINE, PETRA.





## THE RAVINE.

THIS view is taken from the Theatre, and represents the Excavations in the opposite cliffs; and the continuation of the chief eastern entrance to the City. The face of the rock is perforated in every accessible spot; and the prominent masses seem to have borne towers, and other defences of the pass. The bottom was flagged with large stones, not unlike the great Roman ways. But their level is now much broken up.

Laborde conceiving that these excavations are tombs, remarks on the singular neighbourhood of this scene of mortality to the animation of the Theatre. "What a strange habit of mind," he observes, "the people of Petra must have possessed, thus to familiarize themselves so constantly to the idea of Death; as Mithridates (!) accustomed himself to poison, in order to become insensible to its effects."<sup>1</sup>

Yet it is by no means clear, that any of these excavations were originally meant for tombs. For the excavations in the acknowledged Cemetery, outside the City, are not merely on a much smaller scale, but of a different form, being generally niches, cut into the shape of a coffin, and frequently in pairs, as if for members of the same family, and also frequently covered with mould and verdure; in all those points resembling the tombs surrounding Jerusalem; while within the Ravine they exhibit no imitation of the shape of the coffin, no verdure, nor any other covering than dust, nor that dust any other trace than those of the serpent and the lizard.<sup>2</sup>

The picturesque effect of the scene is less open to disputation. The rocks present an endless variety of colours, varying from crimson to the softest rose, and sometimes verging into orange and yellow; those are sometimes exhibited in broad stripes, changing and blending into each other like the hues of shot silk. But the general contrast of the cliffs with the sculptures singularly strikes the eye. Nature in her most savage wildness is brought into immediate connexion with art, sometimes capricious and romantic, but often graceful, and always new. All above is a succession of vast crags, battlements shaped by time and tempest, and sheets of colouring, which time and tempest may have only brightened. All below is a succession of colonnades, porticoes, and corridors; some approaching the purity of the Greek, and others mingling the styles of East and West; some minute and delicate, others broad, bold, and colossal; and all displayed with the rich effect of an Eastern climate, and in positions affording every advantage of light and shade.

In those examples of every style two are predominant, the Egyptian and the Roman-Greek; the former visible in the frequent recurrence of truncated pyramidal forms, and the slightly inclined fronts and sides of the more massive monuments; the latter in the general floridness of decoration in the remaining columns, architraves, and bas-reliefs of the ruins which cover the site of the city, and in the principal sculptures of the rocks.

<sup>1</sup> Laborde.

<sup>2</sup> Roberts's Journal.

Those styles may be accounted for, by the intercourse of a people of opulent traders with the chief sources of ancient commerce. Its connexion with the Egyptian traffic naturally determined it to the solid and grave dignity of the architecture of Memphis and Thebes. Its connexion with the Greek Isles, and with Italy, through its subjugation by the Cæsars, would as naturally determine its adoption of the elegance of Greece, and the imperial exuberance of Rome.

The geology of the Mountains of Edom offers a wide field. Argillaceous rock forms the base, lofty masses of porphyry constitute the body, and long limestone ridges extend above all. The porphyry cliffs average 2000 feet above the Arabah. Wady Mousa is about the same height above it, and the limestone ridges may rise 3000 feet. The whole breadth of the Mountain tract between the Arabah and the Desert is under twenty geographical miles.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Biblical Researches, ii. 551.

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## THE NECROPOLIS.

IN the valley which conducts to Petra, and which lies outside the "Chasm," is the chief Cemetery. The ravine suddenly narrows to a space of about fifty yards, shut in by sandstone cliffs forty or fifty feet high. Here commences the Necropolis. The tombs begin immediately on the right: they are numerous, but the first which peculiarly strike the eye are three on the right, strongly resembling those in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. They are isolated masses of rock, fifteen or twenty feet square, cut away from the cliffs, and leaving a passage of several feet between. In one of them is a small sepulchral chamber, with a low door. Another has columns, but too much defaced to leave their order discoverable. These tombs differ from those of Absalom and Zechariah chiefly in their being flat-roofed, and in their sides being slightly inclined in the Egyptian style. They are mentioned by Burckhardt. A little farther on the left, in the face of the cliff, is a tomb with six Ionic columns. Immediately over this is another, bearing four slender pyramids, sculptured on the rock, the only instance of the kind here.

The valley then contracts more and more, and the cliffs become higher, forming a street of tombs. The rocks are of red sandstone.<sup>1</sup> The large tomb on the left of the Engraving is curious, from its giving some idea of the Petræan style of embellishment. The cornices and architrave, with the capitals and bases of the pilasters, were "let into" the sandstone, and were probably of some richer material, marble, if not bronze.<sup>2</sup> The whole must once have been a scene of stately melancholy.

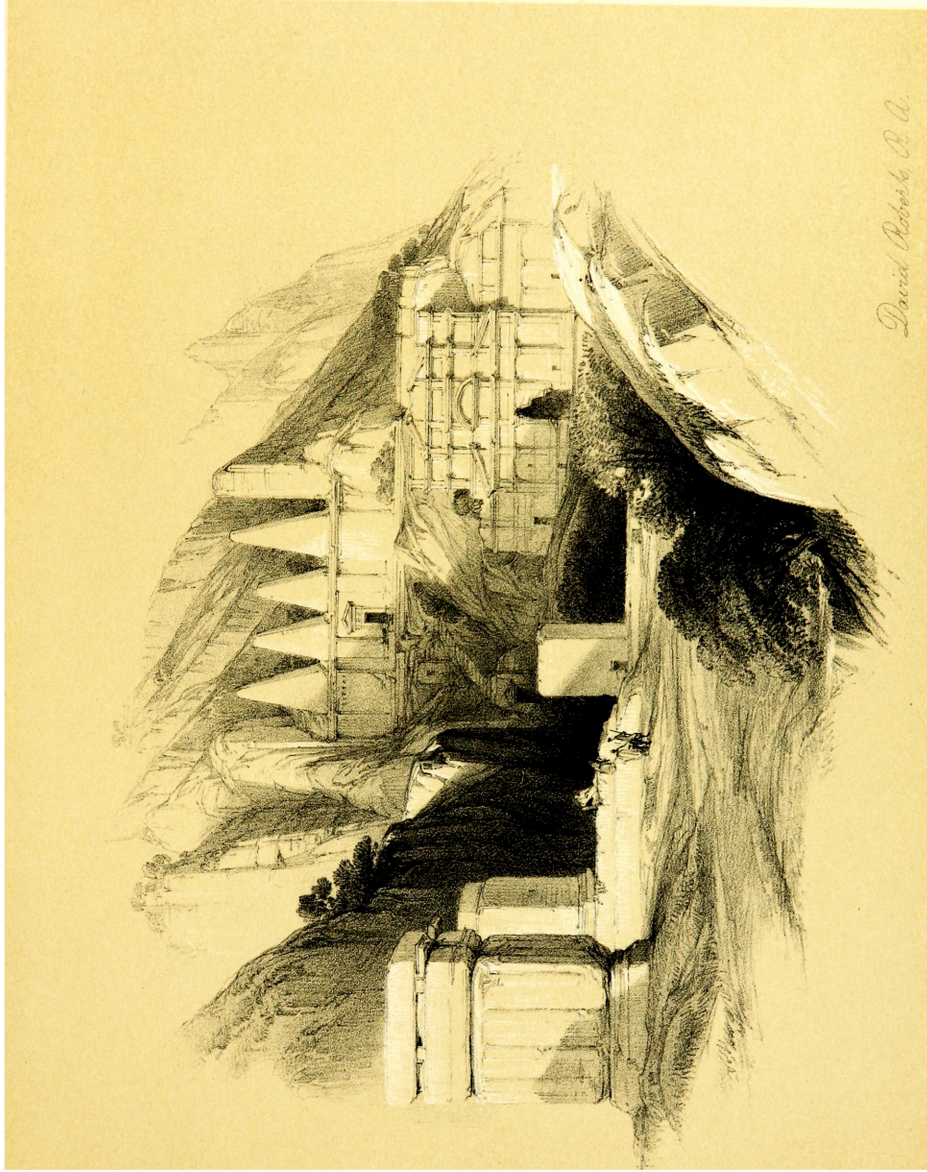
<sup>1</sup> Biblical Researches, iii. 415.

<sup>2</sup> Roberts's Journal.









London, Published by J. G. Cox, 15, Pall Mall, 1856. by J. G. Cox, 15, Pall Mall, 1856.

# THE NECROPOLIS.

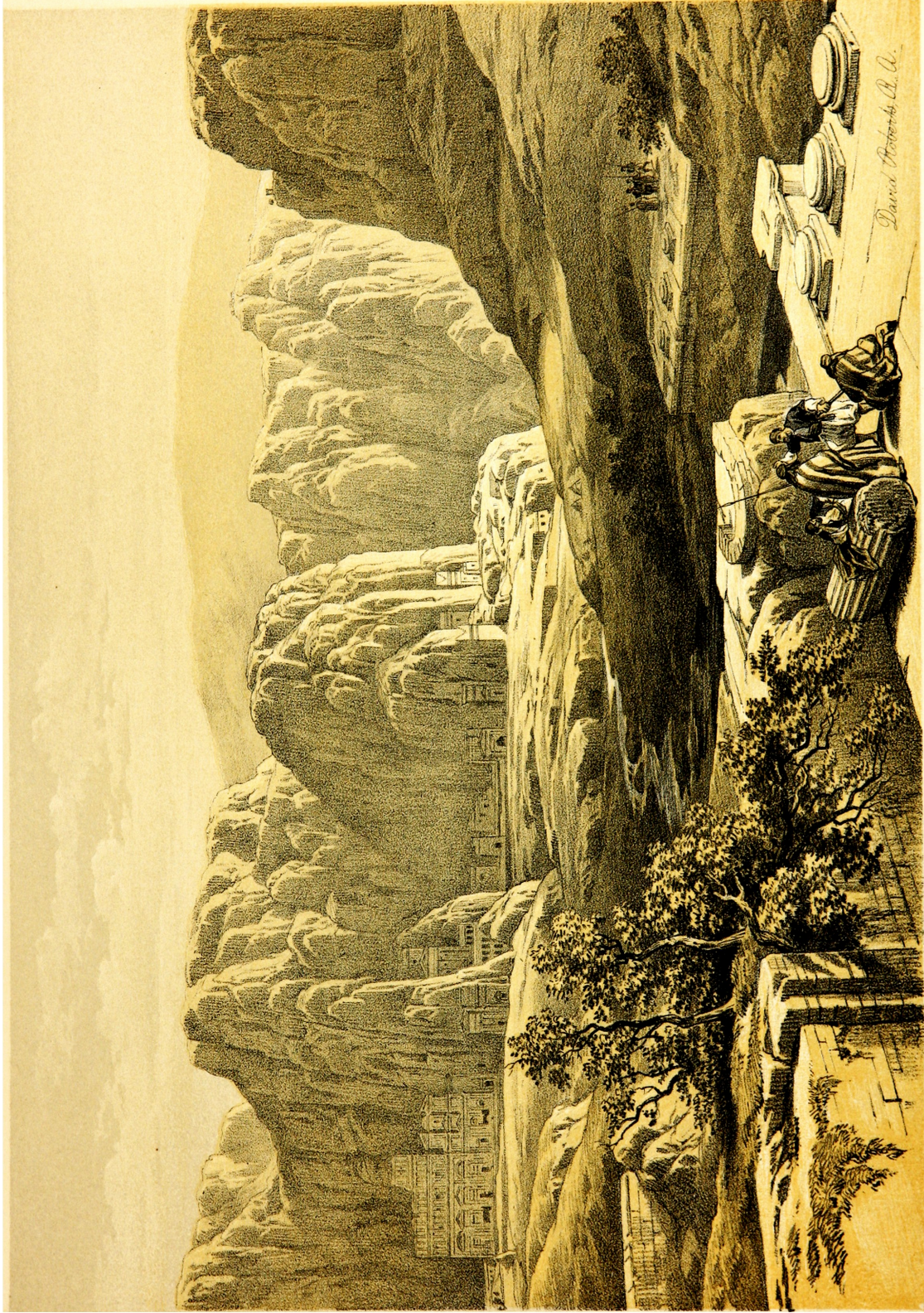












London: Published Feb'y 14<sup>th</sup> 1856 by J. & W. G. & Co. Great-Jacobus Inn, Fields.

SITE OF PETRA, SOUTH.



even not improbable that some of its finest monuments remain to be discovered. The mountains cover the country; they are penetrated with chasms in all directions, and those chasms are now so choked with ruins or vegetation, that they defy the enterprise of the hurried traveller. Yet it was in one of those chasms at the western end of the valley that the unsuspected beauty of El Deir was discovered, through fragments of fallen cliffs, and an ascent of successive terraces, reached by successive flights of steps, "one of them extending over a space of a thousand feet." The chief obstacle, however, has existed in the extortion and ferocity of the Arabs; but a vigorous government would soon remove that obstacle: and, perhaps, no spot on earth would more amply repay a taste fitted to enjoy the noblest combinations of Art and Nature—that enlightened curiosity which takes an interest in the history of human genius—or those still higher feelings, which do homage to Providence, love to trace its solemn path through the times and trials of mankind, and from the desolated magnificence and blighted beauty of nations long past away, draw the high moral for the warning and the wisdom of their own.

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## FORTRESS OF AKABAH, ARABIA PETRÆA.

THIS Fortress is situated at the head of the Gulf of Akabah, on the Red Sea, and lies in the usual route of travellers who visit Petra from Egypt, taking Mount Sinai and other places of Biblical interest on their way.

The present Fortress was built in the sixteenth century, by the Sultan El Ghoury of Egypt. It is square, with strong angular towers, and contains a garrison of thirty men. It stands near the sea-shore, from which it is separated only by a grove of date-trees. The chief advantage of its position is derived from its wells of tolerably good water, both within and without the Fort. It is a *dépôt* for the supply of provisions to the pilgrims who accompany the great caravans to and from Mecca. The Artist made careful researches, and even examination of the wells, in search of evidence, from sculptured remains or inscriptions, of its history before the sixteenth century, but without success;<sup>1</sup> though there is little doubt that it occupies the site of Elath-Ailah, or Ælana; from this name was probably derived that of the Ælanitic Gulf, given to this arm of the sea. Ælana was probably a city near the port of the Edomites, who were conquered by David. After him Solomon made here an important port, when he so much extended maritime commerce in the East.

There are many tumuli near Akabah; heaps formed by the ruins of ancient structures. The water on the coast is very shallow, and sharp shelving rocks forbid the idea that the ancient port was at Akabah; near it, on the other side of the Bay, lies the Island of Graia, offering a most favourable position for a naval station. The Artist thinks, with great probability, that this was the Ezion-Geber of Scripture, while Elath was the *entrepôt* of its commerce.

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.









London Published Feb 7<sup>th</sup> 1856, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

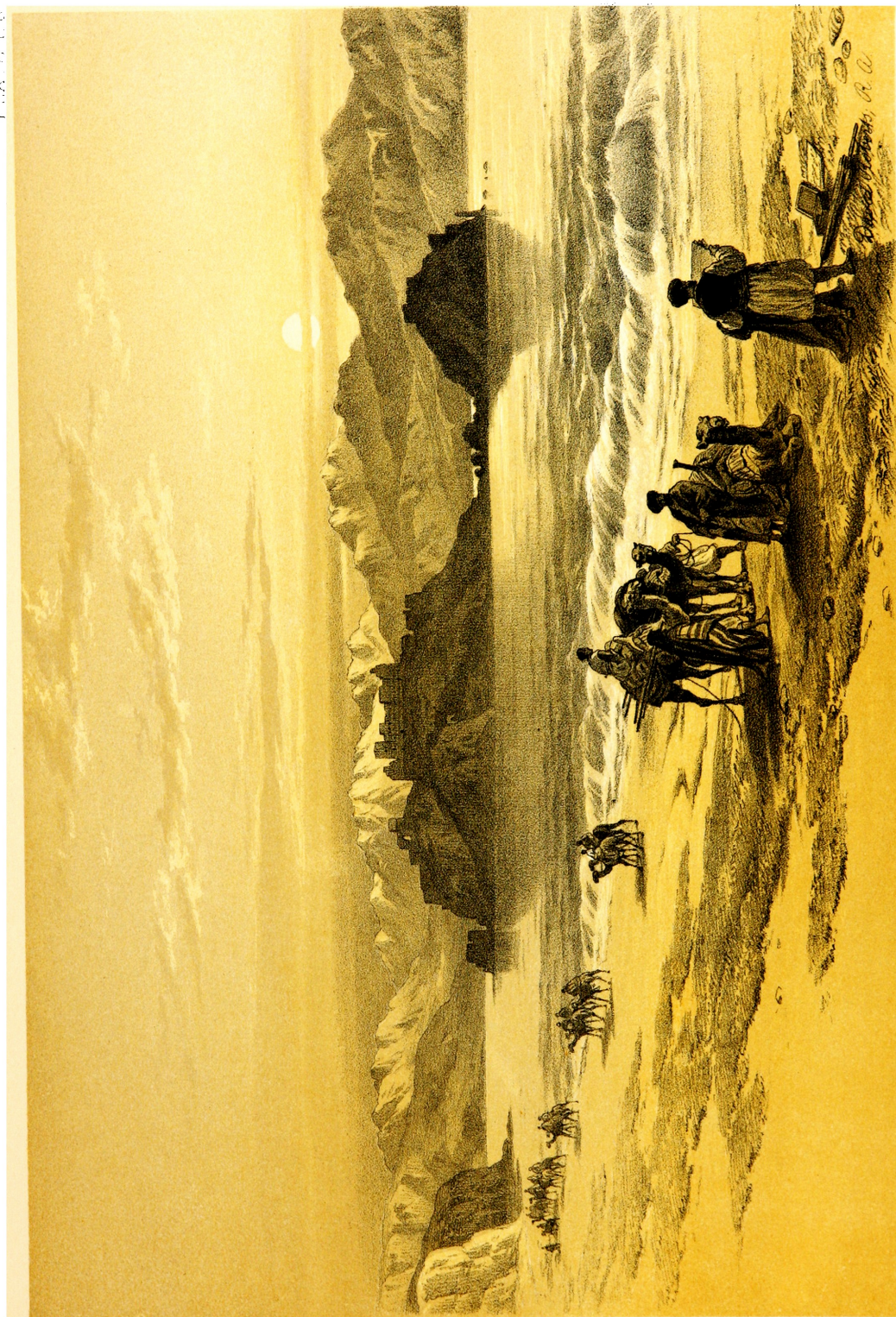
FORTRESS OF AKABAH, ARABIA PETRAEA.











London: Published by J. P. Colver, 14, Dyer's Alley, St. Dunstons, in the Strand.

ISLAND OF AKABAH, GULF OF SYRIA.





## ISLAND OF GRAIA, GULF OF AKABAH.

THIS name has been given to the Island by Laborde; why, it is difficult to say. The Beni-Sa'id Arabs called it "Ascala el Dair," from the ruins of a Castle or Convent which exist on it, and which was occupied, according to the Arabs, before the times of the Crusades. Their tradition is, that a great City once existed in the Island, with a magnificent harbour, and that the entrance was defended by a chain, which was stretched across four or five miles! and tribute paid by all vessels entering. Now, not a solitary sail is ever seen. The waters teem with fish; but only one man was seen at Akabah pursuing fishing as an employment; he sat across a log of wood, and used two palm-branches as oars; yet he caught a great number of excellent fish, and supplied the Caravan of the Artist's party with a great treat after the fare of the Desert.<sup>1</sup>

Whether the site of Akabah, or of the ruined City on the Island, be that of the great port of the Edomites (the probability is in favour of the latter)—still this locality is interesting, as associated with sacred history. Elath was not retained by the Jews more than 150 years after the conquest of the Edomites, by David. In the reign of Joram they revolted,<sup>2</sup> but were defeated by him, and again rebelled. Under Azariah, the power of the Jews was re-established; he is said to have built and restored Elath to Judah; but it was taken by Rezin, King of Syria,<sup>3</sup> in the reign of Ahaz, and never again recovered by the Jews. Elath afterwards fell into the hands of the Ptolemies, then of the Romans, the Greek Emperors, the Arabians, the Sultans of Egypt, the Turks, and finally of Mehemed Ali. Its importance was destroyed by the change in the course of commerce, which, instead of finding its great outlet to the Mediterranean at Tyre, took the Western arm of the Gulf to Alexandria.

Burckhardt, on the authority of Makrizi, the Egyptian historian, says, that it was once the frontier station of the Greeks; that here formerly existed a triumphal arch of the Cæsars; and that, in the time of the Islam, a fine town, inhabited by the Beni-Omeya, containing many mosques. It was taken by the Franks during the Crusades; but Saladin recovered it, by transporting ships upon camels from Cairo. Near Akabah was a large handsome town, called Afzyoun (according to the name, Ezion-Geber), and this supports the idea that Elath and Ezion-Geber were distinct cities.

De Laborde, on his journey to Petra, determined to visit the Island of Graia, upon which no European had set foot since the time of the Crusades. He and his companions constructed a rude raft, for the people possessed no vessel on those waters by which they could reach it. They landed in safety; reached the ruins of the Fortress on

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings, viii. 20-22.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings, xvi. 6.



the Island; made a survey, and walked round the Island, which they found to have a circumference of about 1800 English feet. De Laborde found a large excavation, intended for a reservoir, and a finely-constructed cistern, which from its structure appeared to be of a date anterior to the Fortress. His sketch of the history of Graia is very short;—after having been a kind of suburb to Elath, from the earliest period of the navigation of this Gulf, and its defence against tribes which it was difficult to subdue; it became the theatre of Christian valour in the time of the Crusades; but was wholly abandoned about the fourteenth century.

The forms of the Island and its ruins, backed by the distant range of mountains, and the effect under which they are represented, give great beauty to this highly picturesque subject.

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## CONVENT OF ST. CATHERINE, MOUNT SINAI.

THIS Convent has been built in the form of a square fortress of hewn granite, and flanked with towers, of which one or two have cannon. Thus situated, in a country where, from the general helplessness of the Monks, it would not remain unmolested by the Arabs for a single day, its strength forms the chief security of the inhabitants; for it is accessible only by a projecting trap-door, guarded by another of iron, about thirty feet above the ground. The means of access are a capstan and rope, with a loop at the end, to which travellers fasten themselves, and are thus drawn up. The Convent is large, and resembles a small town, containing many buildings, several courts, and storehouses, a Mosque, with a minaret<sup>1</sup> and a Chapel celebrated as the richest in the land. It has an inexhaustible supply of pure water, from a well, which the Brethren point out to the traveller as that of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, to which the great lawgiver led his flocks,<sup>2</sup> while he was yet living in obscurity in Midian.

The Convent has been built upon the spot where, according to tradition, the Almighty first manifested Himself to Moses, and spake to him out of the burning bush, “Cast off thy shoes, for the spot whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

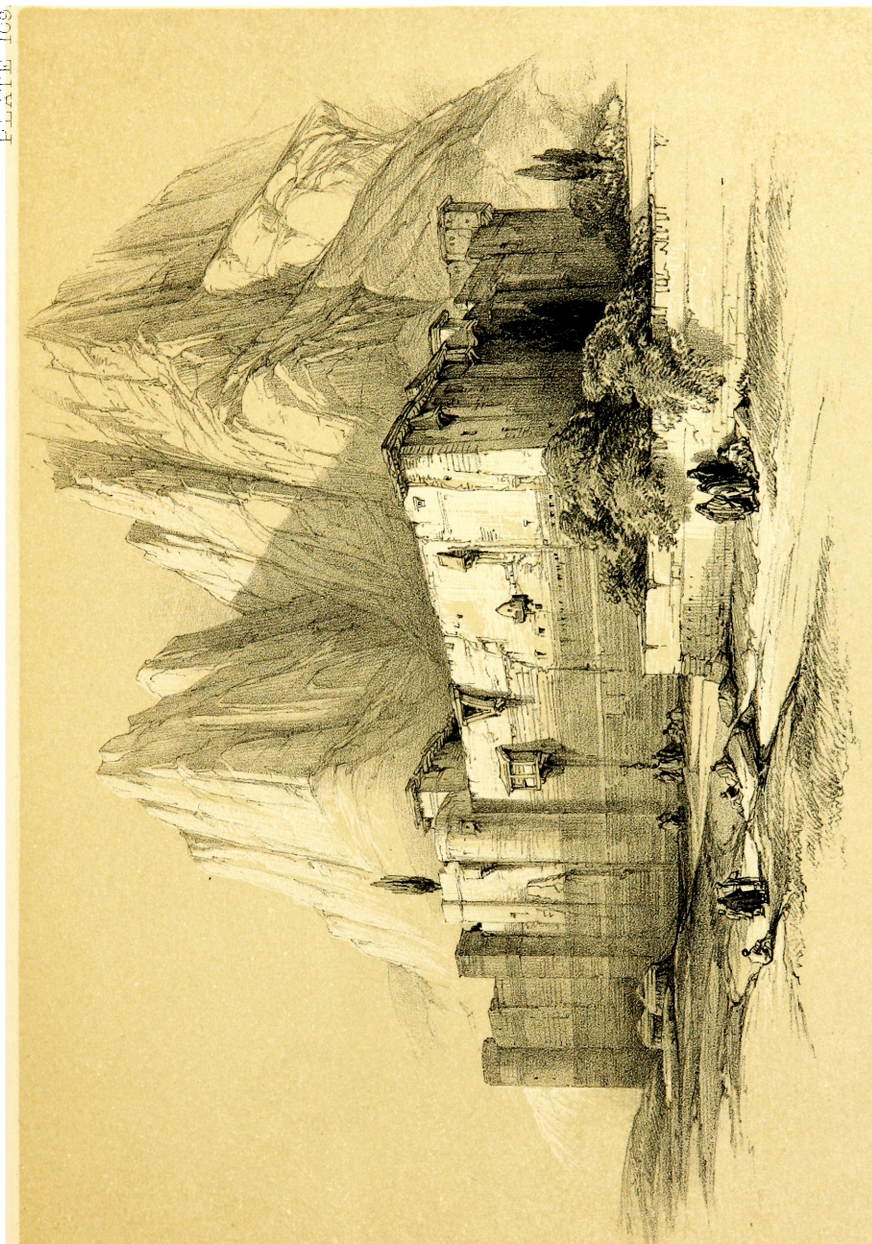
From the sacred character of the spot, many ascetics and anchorites established themselves in recesses in these Mountains as early as the fourth century; but tradition relates, that the Convent was established by Justinian, A.D. 527, on the site where a small Church had been built by the Empress Helena.

<sup>1</sup> The Mosque, a singular object in a Christian Convent, is said to have been built by Mahomet, who gave the Monks a letter of protection, a copy of which is still shown. The Mountain is visited, and highly venerated, by the Mahometans.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus, iii. 1.







*David Roberts R. A.*

London Published Feb'y 15<sup>th</sup> 1856 by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields

CONVENT OF ST. CATHERINE, MOUNT SINAI.











London: Published Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> 1856, by Day & Son, 25, Abchurch Lane, London.

ENCAMPMENT OF THE OULAD-SAID, MOUNT SINAI





## ENCAMPMENT OF THE AULAD-SA'ID.

THIS scene represents the arrival of the caravan of the Artist and his companions, in the country, and at the tents of the Aulad-Sa'id. They were friendly with the Beni-Sa'id, under whose guidance and protection he travelled.<sup>1</sup> The Aulad-Sa'id were encamped close to the base of Mount Serbal. The Mountain is red granite, without a trace of vegetation; and rises majestically to the height of five thousand feet. The powerful tribe which finds its home in this district has been the guardian of the Convent of St. Catherine, from perhaps the period of its foundation. One of the travellers on this occasion thus describes the general appearance of the Arab community.

"At five o'clock we arrived at the encampment of the Aulad-Sa'id. Our painted pavilions looked a little out of place beside the black Arab tents, which were more in character with the dark and wild mountains which formed the back-ground of the picture, and the wild figures who were moving about. The whole scene was quite patriarchal in its character, and carried the mind back to the times when men were hunters, and shepherds in the field, and dwellers in tents. A kid had been killed for us, and our servants were busy, cooking it at a fire in the open air: before one of the tents, two women, seated on the ground, were grinding at a small hand-mill, one turning the stone, while the other poured in the corn: at another, a girl was baking the Arab bread for us. The camels, relieved from their burthens, were cropping the scanty herbage around the tents: troops of boys and girls were driving home the goats from their pasture in the neighbouring valleys; and although some of the highest peaks were still lighted by the setting sun, the moon was beginning to shed a sweet silvery light over the valley."<sup>2</sup>

"Here," says Robinson, "was a fine view of Mount Serbal: as thus seen it presents the appearance of a long, thin, lofty ridge of granite, with numerous points or peaks, of which there are reckoned five principal ones, the whole being strictly what the Germans call a *Kämm*. We saw it now in the bright beams of a morning sun, a grand and noble object, as its rugged peaks were defined upon the deep azure beyond. . . . Here the interior peaks of the great circle of Sinai began to open upon us—black, rugged, desolate summits; and as we advanced, the dark and frowning front of Sinai itself (the present Horeb of the Monks) began to appear. We were still gradually ascending, and the valley gradually opening; but as yet all was a naked desert. Afterwards, a few shrubs were sprinkled round, and a small encampment of black tents was seen on our right, with camels and goats browsing, and some asses belonging to the Convent. The scenery through which we now passed, reminded me strongly of the Mountains around the Mer de Glace, in Switzerland. I had never seen a spot more wild and desolate."<sup>3</sup>

But it is to be recollected that, although in these Sketches the customary names of the Mountains have been adopted, their claims as the sites of the Delivery of the Law have excited much learned discussion. Jebel Mousa, the Sinai of the Monks, exhibits features incompatible with the Sacred History; Jebel Katerin, the loftier peak of Horeb (which is now regarded as the original name of the *range*), seems scarcely

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> Kinnear's Cairo, Petra, and Damascus.

<sup>3</sup> Biblical Researches, i. 125, 130.

less incompatible. It has been strongly argued,<sup>1</sup> that the true Mountain of the Law was Mount Serbal, anciently named Paran; the most conspicuous, and the first, object in the entrance to the Wilderness; a Mountain, wholly separate, of sublime elevation, and of the most striking form and magnitude.

To a people whose entire living generation had seen only the level lands of Egypt, the Israelite march into this region of mountain magnificence, with its sharp and splintered peaks and profound valleys, must have been a perpetual source of astonishment and awe. No nobler school could have been conceived, for training a nation of slaves into a nation of freemen, or weaning a people from the grossness of idolatry to a sense of the grandeur and power of the God alike of Nature and Mind.

<sup>1</sup> Note in the Pictorial Bible.

## ROCK OF MOSES, WADY-EL-LEJA, MOUNT HOREB.

WADY-EL-LEJA is a narrow Valley running up into the Mountains, and containing the deserted Convent of El-Arbain. It lies parallel to the valley containing the Convent of St. Catherine, and is West of Horeb. The view from the entrance gives one of the finest aspects of the granite range, the front of Horeb rising perpendicularly to the height of nearly fifteen hundred feet.<sup>1</sup>

The "Rock of Moses" is, from its size, a remarkable object: it rests isolated where it has fallen from the eastern Mountain above. It is of red granite, hard enough to account for the expression, "a rock of flint."<sup>2</sup> According to recent measurement, it is fifteen feet long, ten feet wide, and twelve feet high.<sup>3</sup> Down the front of this Rock, in an oblique direction, runs a seam, twelve or fourteen inches broad, of apparently a softer material; the Rock, also, has ten or twelve deep horizontal crevices, at nearly equal distances from each other. "On close examination," says the Artist, "I felt convinced that they were not artificial, from the nature of the Rock. I think it must have formed the vault of a cave or recess, through which water had oozed for ages, and left the present appearance."<sup>4</sup>

The reverence with which every object associated with Scripture is regarded in these regions by pilgrims and travellers, is strikingly observable here. This mass of stone is believed to be the actual Rock which was struck by Moses at the command of the LORD, when water gushed forth to supply the Israelites in the Desert. "Behold I will stand before thee there, upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."<sup>5</sup> The Arabs also call it the Rock of Moses; and the reverence of the Bedouins for the relic is scarcely less than that of the Christians.

<sup>1</sup> Bibl. Res. i. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Carne's Travels.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. viii. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Roberts's Journal.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus, xvii. 6.









London, Published Feb 7<sup>th</sup> 1856, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields

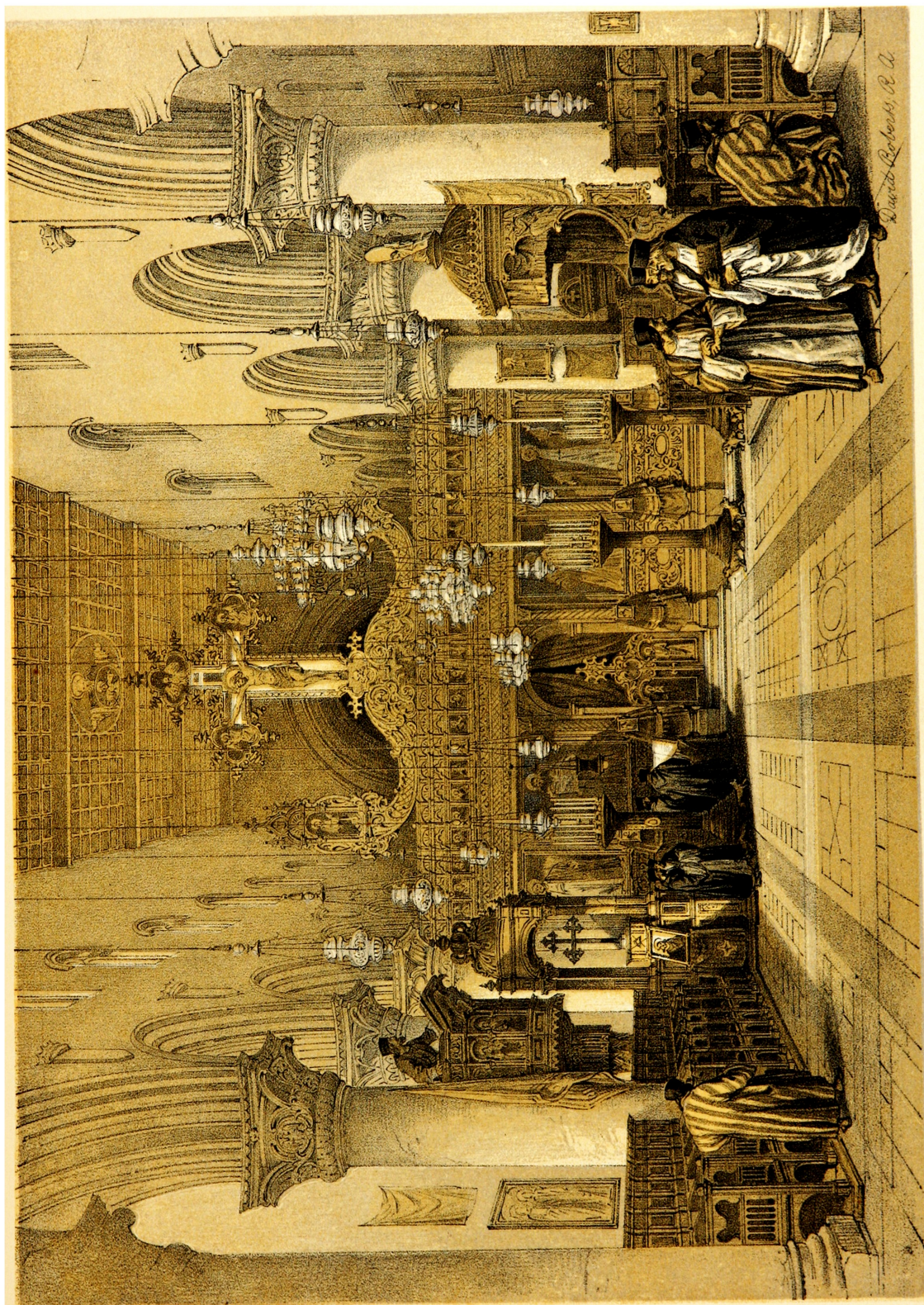
ROCK OF MOSES, WADY EL-LEJA, MOUNT HOREB.











London Published Feb'y 13 1846 by W. Kneller Street, Laurence & Co. Paris

CHAPEL OF THE CONVENT OF ST CATHERINE





## INTERIOR OF THE CHAPEL OF ST. CATHERINE.

"THIS View," says the Artist, "represents the interior of probably the oldest and the richest of all the Eastern churches; its remote and sacred situation, its strength of structure and position, and the deep veneration in which it is held by Mahometans as well as Christians, have favoured its preservation, and secured it in the possession of its riches and relics. From its foundation in the sixth century, down to our day, it has been protected from plunder, though the country in which it is situated has been invaded by lawless conquerors, and it has always been surrounded by tribes of marauders. Its wealth is very great in all that belongs to its Chapel, which is guarded with much jealousy. This, probably, was the reason why so many difficulties were thrown in my way when I attempted to make a sketch of the interior of the Chapel. The brotherhood, though kind in the extreme, and though they allowed me to draw in every other part of the Convent, and themselves sat for sketches and studies, yet always found some excuse, whenever I proposed to make a drawing of the Chapel; they had mislaid the key, or some such frivolous reason. At length, I fairly took out my sketch-book during service; they could not interrupt me while engaged in their sacred duties; and I thus effected my object."

The present Convent was built in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian, and some of the enrichments and decorations are of that period. Like other Greek churches, it possesses a rich and gilded screen, and contains pictures of the saints of the Greek calendar. Moses and Aaron, of course, hold conspicuous places in a spot made sacred by the eventful history of the great Lawgiver. The Screen separates the Altar from the congregation, and conceals the Patriarch from the people when he reads the service to which they respond. Its separation may be intended to represent that of the Jewish Holy Place. Though the pictures of saints and Scriptural subjects are profuse, there are no images, as in the Latin churches. The floor of the Chapel is beautifully inlaid with variegated marble; and on the right is seen a magnificent throne for the Patriarch, or Bishop. The Altar is inlaid with ebony and mother-of-pearl, of the most elaborate and beautiful designs, and is probably, as well as many of the pictures, the work of Byzantine artists. It is covered with costly and ancient votive offerings, most of them enriched with precious stones. Yet the riches of this Altar sink into insignificance when compared with those of the Chapel behind it, raised on the spot on which it is believed that Moses saw the burning bush. "Through this sacred place we were hurried, after we had been requested to uncover our feet, 'for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' We were, therefore, not allowed leisure for the examination of the Altar; but the walls, and even the roof, were covered with the gifts and offerings of Emperors, Kings, and Princes, from the period of its foundation. The floor was covered with the richest and most costly Persian



carpets. On the left, as we entered, we saw the tomb containing the relics of St. Catherine, which were said to have been transported by angels, after her martyrdom at Alexandria, to the summit of Mount Sinai, whence they were brought down by the Monks to their present resting-place, and where they have ever since been held in the most profound veneration.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

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## SUMMIT OF MOUNT SINAI.

### SHOWING THE CHRISTIAN AND MAHOMETAN CHAPELS.

THOSE Chapels are placed on what is traditionally regarded as the summit of Sinai, but the peak distinguished as Mount St. Catherine has a greater elevation. The ascent from the Convent employs about two hours, and the spectator is rewarded by a scene of the most striking magnificence. Around, beneath, and above, all is grandeur; he stands as in the Alps, in the midst of a region of Mountains; but with a feature of beauty wanting in the Alps—the expanse of a brilliant sea, a part of the Gulf of Akabah being in sight. The Chapels on the summit are in singular juxtaposition (Christian and Mahometan), apparently one structure (that on the right in the View is the Christian, the left the Mahometan); but both in a state of ruin from neglect and exposure to the storm.

The Mountain is held sacred by the Mahometans; for the legend tells, that when the Prophet rode on the sacred Camel to Ararat and back in one night, he rested, in passing, on Sinai, and the mark of the Burack, or Camel's foot, where it touched the mountain, is still shown by his followers. The Artist, having heard this tradition, asked his guide from the Convent to point it out to him; but the holy brother of St. Catherine did his bidding very reluctantly.<sup>1</sup> It is a few yards below, and beyond, the Chapel to the right. It has the exact form, and is not larger than the impression which the foot of a camel would make. Marks, thus connected with fable, are not infrequent in religious legend. On the summit of a Ceylonese mountain, the shape of a gigantic foot is an object of native homage, as exhibiting the parting step of Adam! The freaks of Nature are easily seized by fancy or modified by art; and the Mahometan is as much entitled to the exercise of his imagination as the Monk.

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.







London, Published Feb 15<sup>th</sup> 1856 by Day & Son, Great Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

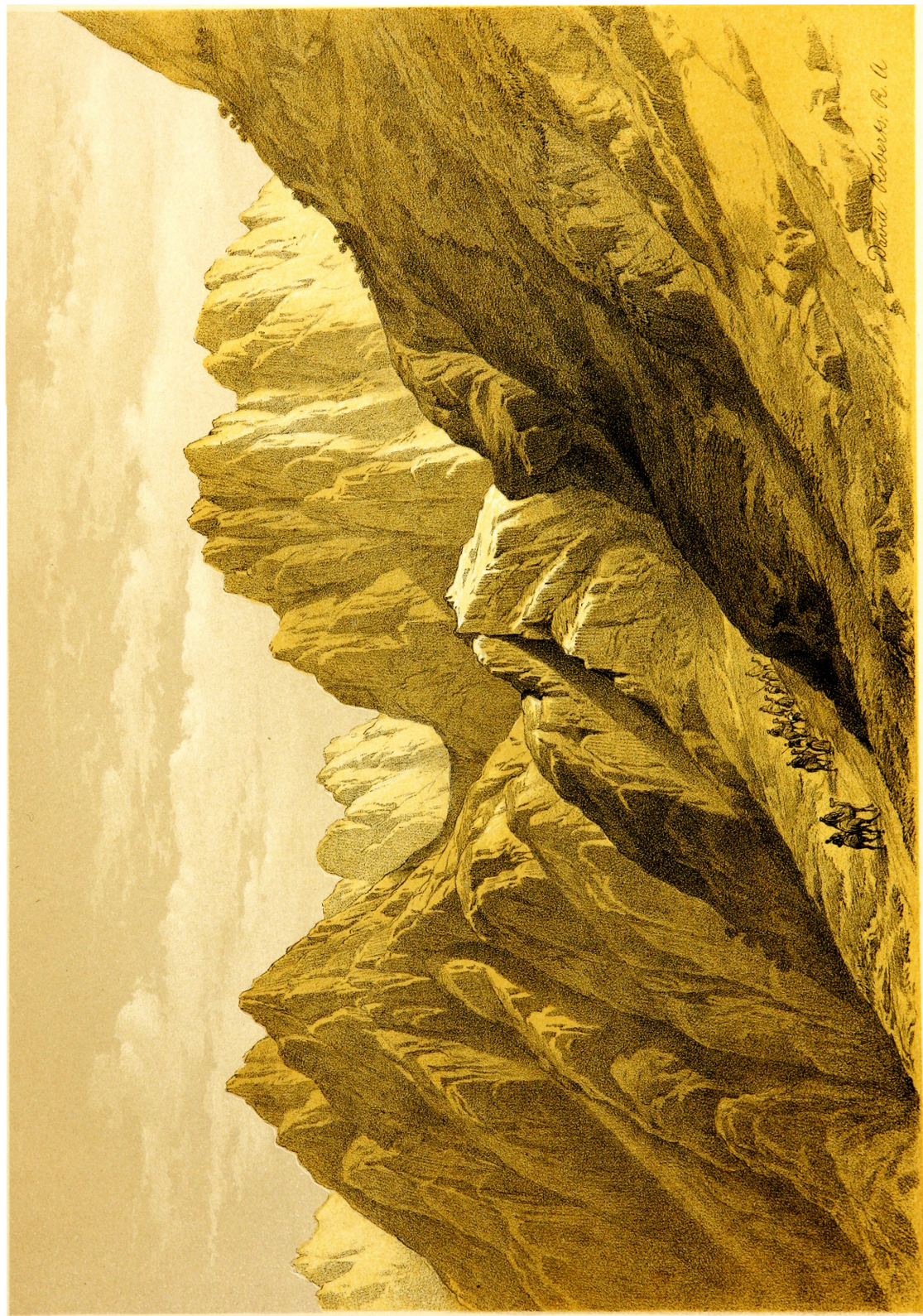
THE CHRISTIAN AND MAHOMETAN CHAPELS ON MOUNT SINAI.











London: Published Feb'y 13<sup>th</sup> 1856 by Day & Son, 34, Fleet Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

ASCENT OF THE LOWER RANGE OF SINAI





## ASCENT OF THE LOWER RANGE OF SINAI.

THE whole career of the Israelites, from the passage of the Red Sea to their entrance into Palestine, was a display of miracle. Yet, such is the Divine adherence to the great law of free agency, that even Miracle was regulated by its action. The Divine Will might, obviously, at a word have transformed the native stiff-neckedness of the Israelite into perfect obedience, have extinguished his recollections alike of Egyptian enjoyment and Egyptian idolatry, and sent him at once into Palestine as its consecrated possessor. But those essential results, instead of being the work of Miracle, were left to be the work of Time. The nation was retained in the Wilderness until all the elder race had disappeared in the course of nature; until the recollections of their house, at once of temptation and bondage, had sunk with them into the grave; and until a new people had been formed, knowing no God but *JEHOVAH*; trained only by His law, guided only by His presence, and prepared to triumph only in His name. The Desert then remained a limit to them no more. The same resistless Power which had bound up a whole nation in this sterile and awful place of discipline, threw open its barrier, and the Israelite marched forth invigorated in his frame by the simple life of the Wilderness, and enlightened in his heart by its religion: a new and noble nature, prepared not only to conquer, but to govern; not only to be the lord of Palestine, but to stand forth the model to the world.

This Sketch gives a portion of the Israelite march to Sinai. The scene is thus graphically described:—"The black and frowning mountains before us, the outworks as it were of Sinai, rose abrupt and rugged from their very base, eight hundred to a thousand feet in height, as if forbidding all approach to the sanctuary within. On the west of the Pass, the cliffs bear the name of *Jebel-el-Haweit*. . . . At 12 $\frac{3}{4}$  o'clock, we began gradually to ascend towards the foot of the Pass before us, called by our Arabs *Nukb Hâwy* (Windy Pass), and by *Burckhardt Nukb er-Râhah*, from the tract above it. We reached the foot at a quarter past one o'clock, and dismounting, commenced the slow and toilsome ascent along the narrow defile, about S. by E., between blackened, shattered cliffs of granite, some eight hundred feet high, and not more than two hundred and fifty yards apart, which every moment threaten to send down their ruins on the head of the traveller. Nor is this at all times an empty threat; for the whole Pass is filled with large stones and rocks, the *débris* of those cliffs. The bottom is a deep and narrow water-course, where the wintry torrent sweeps down with fearful violence. A path has been made for camels along the shelving piles of rocks, partly by removing the topmost blocks, and sometimes by laying down large stones side by side, somewhat in the manner of a Swiss mountain-road. But although I had crossed the most rugged passes of the Alps, and made from *Chamouny* the whole circuit of *Mont Blanc*, I never found a path so rude and difficult as that which we were now ascending. The camels toiled slowly and painfully along, stopping frequently; so that though it took them two hours and a quarter to reach the top of the Pass, the distance cannot be reckoned at more than one hour."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Biblical Researches*, i. 129.

The Artist says, "After winding through this terrific Pass for about three hours, night closed around us, before reaching the Plain, at the extremity of which stands the Convent. The effect of the setting sun upon the high peaks which overhung the Pass, whilst the ravine below was enveloped in shadow, was a sight of remarkable beauty. The pathway which wound up the face of the Mountain, the work of a remote age, and which must have been one of prodigious labour, was now neglected and broken by the mountain-torrents. Other parts were overgrown, and displaced by the roots of the wild plants, which everywhere projected from the cliffs and hollows of the rocks. Huge fragments, which had been loosened by the rains of winter, had rolled down, and choked the narrow pathway, rendering it difficult for our small caravan to thread its course, especially when darkness overtook us."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

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## ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF SINAI.

LABORDE describes his course, towards the summit of Sinai, as lying through a ravine to the south-west. The Monks had originally arranged a series of slabs in tolerably regular order, which once formed a convenient staircase to the top of the Mountain. The rains, however, disturbed them, and as no repairs have for a long time been attended to, the stairs are in many places in ruins. On approaching the foot of Sinai, and immediately before quitting Horeb, the traveller sees a door built in the form of an arch; on the key-stone of the arch, a cross has been carved. An affecting custom used to take place near this door; one of the Monks of the Convent stationed himself there in prayer, and heard the confessions of the pilgrims, who, when thus nearly at the end of their pilgrimage, were not in the habit of accomplishing it until after they had obtained absolution. Laborde passed a similar door before arriving at the spot whence he discovered the summit of Sinai, and the two edifices which surmount it.<sup>1</sup>

The condition of the staircase appears since to have grown more ruinous, for the Artist, twenty years afterwards, observes, "In many places the steps have given way, and rolled down, and, at the time when we ascended, the snow lay deep in the places sheltered from the sun, and the way was so slippery from the ice, as to render the ascent not only a work of great difficulty, but of some danger."<sup>2</sup> Those steps are of great antiquity, and appear to have been constructed at least as early as the time of the first devotees who established themselves in the Mountains of the Wilderness.

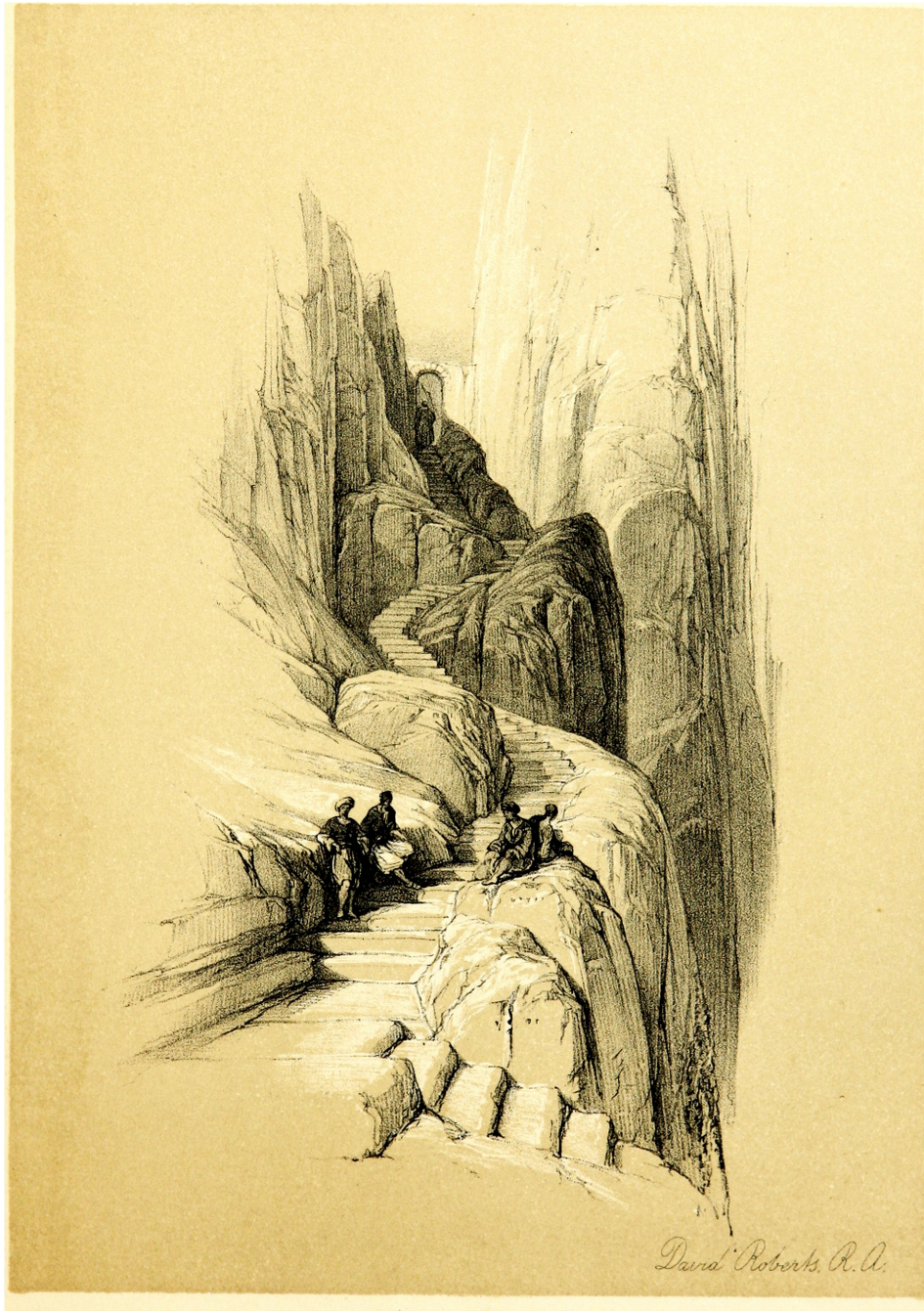
<sup>1</sup> Journey to Mount Sinai.

<sup>2</sup> Roberts's Journal.









London Published March 1<sup>st</sup> 1856, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields

ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT SINAI











London Published March 1<sup>st</sup> 1856 by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields

THE CONVENT OF ST CATHERINE, MOUNT SINAI





## CONVENT OF ST. CATHERINE, MOUNT SINAI,

### LOOKING TOWARDS THE PLAIN OF THE ENCAMPMENT.

IN this title, the traditional name of the Mountain is adopted, without deciding the question of reality. The Artist has taken the Sketch about due South of the Convent, looking upon the track which he pursued from the presumed Plain of the Israelite Encampment.

The general aspects of both the Plain and Mountain unquestionably give a strong sense of fitness for that great transaction, of which the direct purpose was to impress a nation of slaves, Egyptian-born, with homage for the God of Nature and of Revelation. The primitive wildness, the abrupt majesty, and the almost inaccessible height of the pinnacles, seem made for the Throne of HIM who "maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind." Here, superior as the actual Presence must have been to all Imagination, the traveller can still imagine the "cloud, the lightning, and the trumpet." The scene amply filled the mind of a Prophet almost a thousand years after. Habakkuk, in one of the most renowned bursts of Hebrew poetry, thus records the Descent on Sinai: "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of His hand; and there was the hiding of His power. Before Him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at His feet. He stood, and measured the earth; He beheld, and drove asunder the nations, and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow; His ways are everlasting."<sup>1</sup>

The author of the Biblical Researches, when he entered upon the Plain, observes,—  
"As we advanced, the valley opened still wider and wider, with a gentle ascent, and became full of shrubs and tufts of herbs, shut in on each side by lofty granite ridges, with rugged, shattered peaks, a thousand feet high, while the face of Horeb rose directly before us. Both my companion and myself involuntarily exclaimed, 'Here is room enough for a large encampment!' As we crossed the Plain our feelings were strongly affected, at finding here so unexpectedly a spot so entirely adapted to the Scriptural account of the giving of the Law.<sup>2</sup> No traveller has described this Plain, or even mentioned it, except in a slight and general manner; probably because most of them have reached the Convent by another route. . . . As we approached the Mountain, our head Arab, Beshârah, became evidently quite excited. He prayed that our pilgrimage might be accepted, and bring rain; and with great earnestness besought, that when we ascended the Mountain, we should open a certain window in the Chapel there towards the South, which, he said, would certainly cause rain to fall. He also entreated, almost with tears, that we should induce the Monks to have compassion on the people, and say prayers, as they ought to do, for rain. When told that God alone could send rain, and that they should look to Him for it, he replied, 'Yes, but the Monks have the book of prayer for it; do persuade them to use it as they ought.' There was an earnestness in his manner which was very affecting,

<sup>1</sup> Habakkuk, iii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus, xix. 20.



but cannot be described." The Arab's solicitation was trivial; but it was evidently connected with the holiness of the ground.

Having, with his companion, obtained admission to the Convent, the traveller says,—  
"I was affected by the strangeness and overpowering grandeur of the scenes around us; and it was for some time difficult to realise the consciousness that we were now actually within the very precincts of that Sinai, on which from the earliest childhood I had thought and read with so much wonder. Yet, when at length the impression came with its full force upon my mind, although not given to the melting mood, I could not refrain from bursting into tears."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Biblical Researches, i. 130-134.

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## CHAPEL OF ELIJAH, MOUNT SINAI.

AFTER passing the second portal in the ascent by the steps or stairs in the ravine, the traveller reaches a little plain or basin, on the ridge which divides the valley of the Convent from that of El-Leja, and here he first perceives the loftier peaks of the range; that of Jebel Mûsa on the left, and that of St. Catherine on the south-west beyond the valley of El-Leja. In this plain is a cypress-tree, near a deep well; and on a rock near it are several Arabic inscriptions, records of pilgrimage.<sup>1</sup> Not far from the well, and where the ascent commences, is a rude, low building, which contains the "Chapel of Elijah." It is raised on the spot to which he is presumed, by tradition, to have retired, when he fled into the wilderness from Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, in the general oppression of the Church of Israel. Within the Chapel, and on one side of the altar, is seen (on the left of the Sketch) a small cave, in which the Prophet is said to have remained. "And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?"<sup>2</sup>

This little Greek Chapel is interesting, though in a state of ruin, placed as it is in front of a spot thus venerated. Pictures of saints, with lighted tapers, and other decorations of the Eastern Church, are, even in this wild place, displayed.

The Greek Church draws a broad distinction between statues and pictures in its places of worship. The former it anathematizes, while the latter it consecrates, assigning as the reason, the language of the Apostle (1 Cor. viii. 4); and pronouncing the image to be "a work of man's invention, while the picture is an adumbration of some true event, or actual existence;" their chief dependence for this opinion being the authority of the fourth General Council. The use of tapers and torches in the service in daylight is regarded by them as a memorial of the primitive and persecuted Church, when the Christians met before daylight for security, or in subterranean cells for concealment.

<sup>1</sup> Biblical Researches, i. 152.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings, xix. 9.







London, Published March 1<sup>st</sup> 1856, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

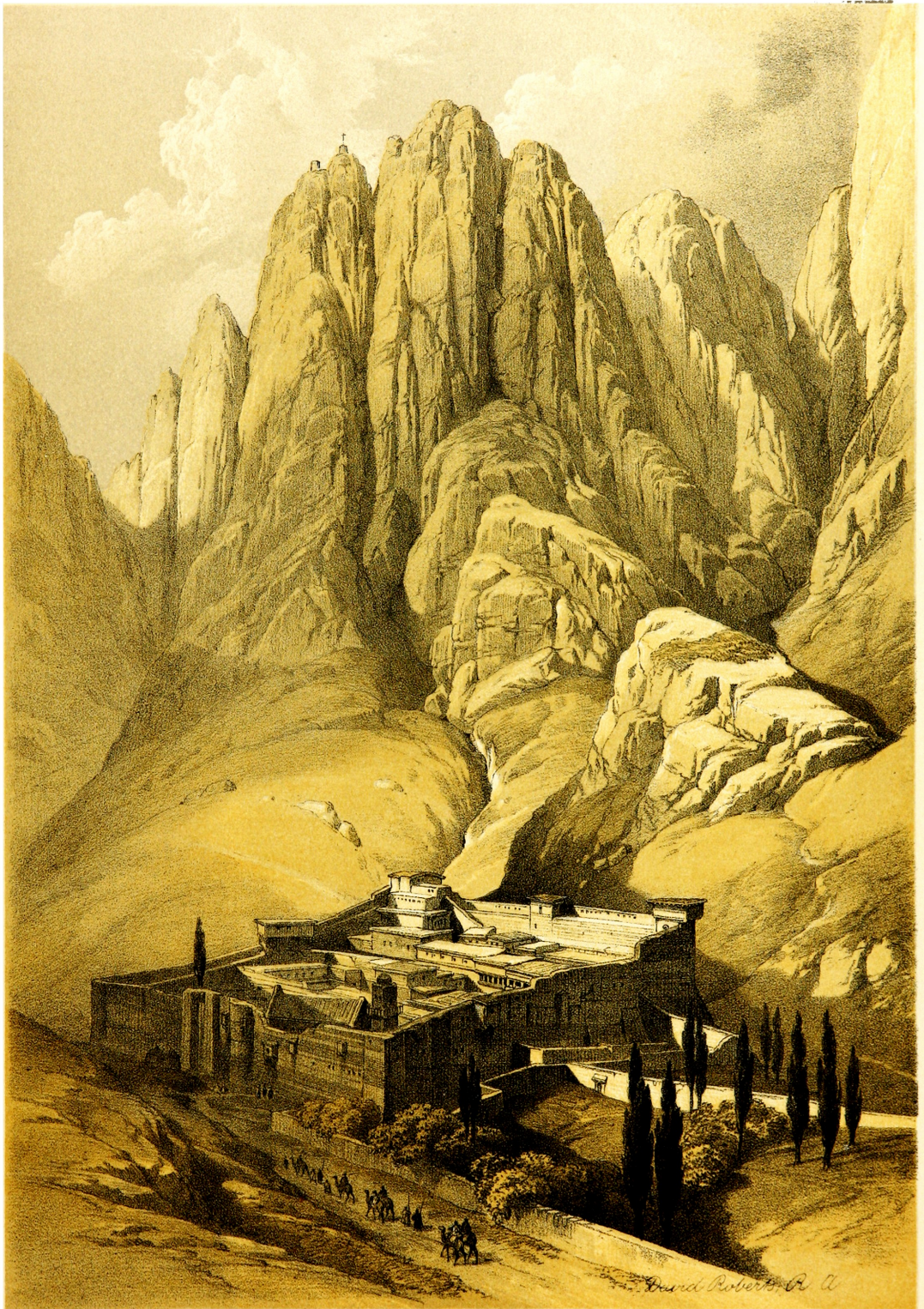
CHAPEL OF ELIJAH, MOUNT SINAI.











London Published March 1<sup>st</sup> 1856 by Day & Son, 65, Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields

CONVENT OF ST CATHERINE, WITH MOUNT HOREB





## GENERAL VIEW OF THE CONVENT OF ST. CATHERINE.

THE whole scene of the sojourning of the Israelites lies in a Peninsula, between the forks of the upper portion of the Red Sea. The Peninsula is of a triangular form, and from about half-way down to its point at the South is a mass of mountains, intersected with deep valleys, and exhibiting a few barren plains.

The geographical position of the Convent is in Lat. 28° and Long. 31° from Paris. The elevation above the sea is about 4966 Paris feet.

Allusion has been already made to the differences of learned opinion on the site of the Giving of the Law. It appears that Jebel-Mûsa (the Mount of Moses) exhibits no features corresponding to the Sacred History. Robinson, to whose judgment and diligence much respect is due, regards the Plain Er-Râhah, with the Mount now named Horeb immediately in its front, as the most probable locality. But he admits that he had not visited Jebel-Serbal. He also regards Horeb as anciently the name of the whole range, and Sinai as that of a particular pinnacle; arguing from the narrative, which, before and after the Giving of the Law, speaks only of Horeb; while during that great transaction Sinai (with one exception) alone is named. "As we advanced," he says, "the dark and frowning front of Sinai itself (the present Horeb of the monks) began to appear. It was a scene of solemn grandeur wholly unexpected, and such as we had never before seen; and the associations which at the moment rested upon our minds were almost overwhelming. . . . Still advancing, the front of Horeb rose like a wall before us, and one can approach quite to the foot, and touch the Mount."<sup>1</sup>

He narrates a visit which he and his companion made to many of the peaks of Sinai; but not satisfied that the view from those agreed with the Scripture account, they decided upon scaling the almost inaccessible peak of Es-Sufsâfeh, the pinnacle of Horeb above the Convent. "We first attempted," he says, "to climb the side in a direct course, but found the rock so smooth and precipitous, that after some falls, we were obliged to give it up, and clamber upwards along a steep ravine by a more circuitous course. . . . The extreme difficulty, and even danger of the ascent, was well rewarded by the prospect that opened before us. The whole plain Er-Râhah lay spread out beneath our feet, with the adjacent Wadys and Mountains; while Wady Esh-Sheikh on the right, and the recess on the left, both connected with and opening broadly from Er-Râhah, presented an area which seems nearly double that of the plain. Our conviction was strengthened, that here or on some one of the adjacent cliffs, was the spot where the Lord 'descended in fire' and proclaimed the Law. Here lay the plain where the whole congregation might be assembled; here was the mount that could be approached and 'touched;' and here the mountain-brow, where alone the lightnings and the thick cloud would be visible to the Camp, when the Lord 'came down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai.'"<sup>2</sup>

The primary purpose of the Law was to establish the morality of mankind. It was the first instance, from the days of Noah, in which peculiar sins were marked by Divine condemnation. The general impulse of natural justice had already prohibited crimes palpably injurious to society. But the Law not simply strengthened that original impulse,

<sup>1</sup> Biblical Researches, i. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Biblical Researches, i. 157.

but gave it a new distinctness, a new force, and a new authority. It was revealed, as the Apostle declares, "on account of transgressions." And, as fear of punishment is the natural guard against the commission of crime, the "terrors of the Lord" were displayed to the eyes of the people. All, hitherto, had been preparative to Divine awe. The miraculous passage of the Red Sea, the miraculous support in the Wilderness, the surrounding scene of utter desolation, the daily rescue from famine; were all combined in creating a sense of total dependence. But the Giving of the Law presented a new character of *JEHOVAH*. The people had, till then, seen Him only as their Protector. They were now to see Him as their Judge. Death was to be proclaimed against national and individual crime; and the wild hills, the continual thunders, the cloudy throne, and the angelic trumpet, were only accessories to that sacred terror, which was to be consummated by the voice of God Himself, pronouncing the principles of moral government for all the generations of man.

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## AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TEMPLE ON GEBEL GARABE.

THIS title has been given, as the one adopted in the country; although there exists some doubt of the propriety of its application.<sup>1</sup> A wilder spot cannot be imagined. The ruins lie in the Desert, on the summit of a mountain, of no great elevation, but of difficult access. These extraordinary relics of an unknown period were discovered by Niebuhr in 1761; and though often visited since, the inscriptions have defied every attempt made to apply to them our growing knowledge of the Egyptian hieroglyphic character. No real approach has yet been obtained to the origin, or the purport, of these erections. One of the later conjectures is, that it was an ancient place of pilgrimage, and that the upright stones covered with inscriptions were votive rather than sepulchral monuments.<sup>2</sup>

The Artist made several exact copies of the inscriptions, but none of them have yet been deciphered. "They lie within a small enclosure on the mountain, 160 feet long by 70 feet broad. Within this space are about fifteen upright stones, like tombstones, and several fallen ones, covered with hieroglyphics, and also the remains of a small Temple, whose columns are decorated with the head of Isis for a capital." The whole summit is covered with upright and fallen stones, some of them evidently fragments of structures. Several of the stones and the inscriptions are remarkably well preserved; others are worn away and decayed. "What could have been the intent of these temples and memorial stones in the midst of solitude and silence, in this lone and distant land with which they would seem to have no possible connexion? This is a point wrapped in the darkness of time, and which the hand of modern science has not yet unveiled."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Prudhoe.

<sup>3</sup> Bib. Res. i. 116.









Engraved from a photograph by Mr. J. G. Thompson, and published by the British Museum.

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TEMPLE ON GEREL KARABE











London: Published March 1856 by Day & Son, 11, St. Martin's Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

PRINCIPAL COURT OF THE CONVENT OF ST. CATHERINE





## PRINCIPAL COURT OF THE CONVENT OF ST. CATHERINE.

THE Artist, in this View, introduces the costume of the Monks of St. Catherine. The Superior is distinguished by a black cloak ; the rest of the Brotherhood wear robes of the striped brown cloth spun from the hair of camels and goats, such as are in use among the Bedouins. The monks, who do not exceed twenty in number, are the tailors, shoemakers, bakers, brewers, carpenters, and other handicraftsmen, of the Convent. The Superior, at this period, was an intelligent and courteous person ; he had travelled long, and in the chief countries of Europe ; his visit to England was a subject on which he was eloquent.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the Monks are natives of the Greek Islands. In general, they do not remain in the Convent more than from four to five years ; when they return to their country, proud of their having been “sufferers among the Bedouins ;” some, however, have been here forty years. Their rules are strict with regard to food and prayer ; they are obliged to attend mass twice a-day and twice in the night, and they taste no flesh all the year round ; four days of the week they live on bread and vegetables ; the latter they cultivate in a pleasant garden adjoining the building, into which there is a subterraneous passage. The soil is strong, but in this climate, wherever water is in plenty, almost the very rocks will produce vegetation. Their fruits are oranges, lemons, almonds, mulberries, apricots, peaches, pears, apples, and olives, and all of the finest quality. Nebek trees, and a few cypresses, overshadow the beds in which melons, cucumbers, and various kinds of culinary and sweet-scented herbs, are grown. The garden is, however, seldom visited by the Monks, except the few whose business it is to keep it in order, for, although surrounded by high walls, it is not inaccessible to the Bedouins, who steal the fruit, and sell it to the Monks ; but they leave untouched the other productions of the garden.<sup>2</sup> The Convent contains eight or ten small court-yards, some of which are neatly laid out in beds of flowers and vegetables, with dates and many vines. Its apparent space within and the variety of its appropriation surprise every traveller. The number of small rooms in the lower and upper stories formerly exceeded three hundred. It contains also store-rooms for provisions, bakehouses, &c., and besides the Great Church, it has Chapels for the separate worship of the Syrian, Coptic, Armenian, and Latin Christians, and, what naturally still more excites surprise, a Mosque ; which, as has been already mentioned, was built by a species of compact, in the sixteenth century, to preserve the Convent from destruction by the Arabs.

<sup>1</sup> Roberts's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> Burckhardt's Travels.



## EYUN MUSA, THE WELLS OF MOSES.

### WILDERNESS OF TYH.

THESE Fountains lie on the East side of the Gulf of Suez, near the shore; and are close to the spot where the Israelites (traditionally) reached the coast, after the miraculous passage of the Red Sea. The Wells vary in number, in the accounts of travellers; generally from seven to ten, or even up to fifteen; they are probably subject to change; from some the waters escape, or they are filled up, and others are again excavated. The water is brackish, a taste to which habit or necessity can alone reconcile the traveller. About twenty stunted palm-trees, or palm-bushes, grow around in the sand. A little barley is irrigated from some of the Fountains, which gives the spot a peculiar value in the eyes of Suez; it being the only effort of cultivation in the neighbourhood. Near the Fountains is a low mound of fragments of tiles and pottery with some foundations, indicating the site of a former village.<sup>1</sup>

But the true interest in the whole shore arises from its having been traversed by the host of Israel. At every halt of the multitude, water must have been of the first importance. Its supply in such an exigency must have been wholly miraculous. The natural supply is utterly impossible. A single caravan, perhaps a single camel, would now exhaust the Fountains, which, under the rod of Moses, supplied, from day to day, the thirst of millions!

<sup>1</sup> Biblical Researches, i. 99.







London, Published March 15<sup>th</sup> 1856 by Day & Son, Great Street, near St. Martin's Lane.

AYUN MUSA — THE WELLS OF MOSES, WILDERNESS OF TYH.











David Roberts, R.A.

London, Published by Messrs. Agnew & Sons, 15, Abchurch Lane, in the City.

APPROACH TO MOUNT SINAI





## THE FIRST SIGHT OF SINAI.

THIS View is taken from the Encampment of the Artist and his party: and exhibits the first aspect of the Chain of Sinai to the traveller approaching from Suez.

The Sketches of SINAI have been variously given in this work; for the purpose of rendering the untravelled inquirer master of the characteristic scenery of events associated with the noblest recollections, and the most stupendous interests of mankind.

The Views of JERUSALEM and the surrounding countries had been presented, from all their leading points, and in all their varieties of aspect, with the same purpose; that of giving a complete conception of localities sacred to every feeling of religious homage. Thus, to those who contemplate a journey to Palestine, this work will contribute valuable knowledge: to those who have travelled there, the revival of recollections which none would willingly suffer to pass away: and to the larger class, who from circumstances remain at home, faithful representations, not only of the country, but of the habits of the people, and the companionship of the "Children of the Desert."

To the observer of Nature, the peninsula of Sinai is one of the most singular anomalies on the globe. It is an immense mass of mountains, without any of the discoverable purposes for which mountains seem to have been formed. It marks no boundary between nations; its summits collect no waters to fertilise the surrounding region; and, so far as research has hitherto gone, the Sinaitic range has not exhibited any of those mineral treasures, either metal or marble, which constitute mountains a source of wealth to man. Thus, standing in the midst of a Desert which almost prohibits human possession, pouring no river from its pinnacles on the plain, and barren alike of mineral and vegetable production, its existence remains a great physical problem.

Yet are we not entitled to regard the problem as solved by Scripture, and by Scripture alone? If it was the purpose of Divine Providence to draw the most visible line of distinction between the slavery of the Egyptian serf and the discipline of the Israelite; between a race accustomed to the grossness of Egyptian idolatry, and a nation designed as the especial depositories of the true worship; between the languor of frames exhausted by an African climate, or oppressed by the labours of the brick-kiln and the manufactory, and the temperate and hardy habits of the traveller and the mountaineer; or even to teach that sense of the sublime, and that breadth and boldness of thought, which are unconsciously inspired by scenes of natural grandeur; no spot on Earth could have been found fitter to make all those powerful and essential impressions than the mountain mass of Sinai. When we recollect the greatness of the purpose, can we be surprised at the majesty of the means? Can we contemplate the majesty of the means, without a new homage to the power of Providence? or can we rationally doubt that this purpose was designed, from the hour when the Deluge went down,

the Globe was again prepared for the uses of mankind, and its divisions marked for the future dwelling of nations? No territory of the Earth ever accomplished objects of such holiness, might, and magnitude. It witnessed a succession of miracles, on the scale of a people, and with a duration of forty years; it trained the most memorable of all nations to Law, Government, and Religion. Its purpose was then done; Sinai became a wilderness once more: and it has never been repeopled, to this hour. Its purpose was fulfilled,—amply, once, and FOR EVER!

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### SCENE ON THE QUAY OF SUEZ.

It may still be too early to predict the future importance of the comparatively quiet Quay of Suez; although the failure of the attempt to improve our intercourse with India by the navigation of the Euphrates has hitherto left the direct passage between Europe and Asia by the Red Sea without a rival. A point which unites two quarters of the globe, and by which two oceans have their nearest connexion, would naturally, with the increasing activity of commerce, increase in value; notwithstanding the want of fresh water, of every kind of verdure, and the utter absence of cultivation. The date of Suez does not go farther back than the earlier period of the sixteenth century, when it became the place of transit for Eastern merchandise, and even fitted out naval armaments. The discovery of the passage by the Cape of Good Hope gradually reduced its value; and it existed only as a place for provisioning the caravans to Mecca; but now, the employment of steam navigation, and the British intercourse with the East, promise to remove the wretched establishments on the Quay of Suez. Yet, even this contingency depends on others. The shallowness of the Gulf at this part is already felt as a serious obstruction; and a Railway directed to any more favourable point of the shore would consign the Town to immediate decay. The project of a Ship Canal would be equally fatal; and although this has hitherto been only matter of theory, it would be difficult to limit the enterprise of a Government which in six months completed the Mahmoodieh Canal forty miles long!









*David Roberts, R.A.*

London, Published March 15<sup>th</sup> 1856, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Machines Inn Fields.

SCENE ON THE QUAY OF SUEZ.











David Roberts, R.A.

London: Published May 4, 1869, by Day & Son, Gate Street, Finsbury, London.

# SUEZ GENERAL VIEW





## GENERAL VIEW OF SUEZ.

SUEZ (in Arabic, Suweis) stands on a corner of land projecting into the head of the Arabian Gulf, distant from Cairo about sixty four geographical, or seventy-five English statute miles. The site of Kolsum (Tell Kolsum) is still traceable, a third of a mile from Suez. The names of Arsinoe, Cleopatris, and Clysmā, are given to imaginary sites in the neighbourhood; all of which were probably only elder forms of Kolsum.

“Even among the miserable cities of Turkey and Egypt, few present so wretched an appearance as Suez. Standing on the borders of the Desert and on the shore of the Sea, with bad and unwholesome water, and not a blade of grass growing around it, and depending upon Cairo for the food which supports its inhabitants, it sustains a poor existence by the trade of the great caravan for Mecca, and the small commerce between the ports of Cosseir, Djiddeh, and Mocha. A new project has lately been attempted here, which, it might be supposed, would have a tendency to regenerate the fallen city. The route to India by the Red Sea is in the full tide of successful experiment; the English flag is often seen waving in the harbour; and about once in two months an English Steamer arrives from Bombay: but even the clatter of a steam-boat is unable to infuse life into its sluggish population.”<sup>1</sup>

It is only eight years since this description was written, on the spot; and now there are not only arrivals and departures of the English steam-packets, twice in the month, for England and Bombay, but steam communications even to China. The rapid and valuable intercourse now established between Europe and our Asiatic possessions across the African Isthmus, has, in spite of every disadvantage of climate and infertility, already raised Suez to an importance which no town on the Gulf ever possessed before.

The place of the Passage of the Israelites has excited much learned inquiry. It has been generally supposed to commence from the mouth of the Wady Tawarik, south of Ras Atakah. But this hypothesis seems untenable, from the breadth of the Sea, which there is twelve geographical miles.

The more probable conception is, that the passage was made across the small arm of the Sea, which runs up by Suez, a breadth of less than four miles. From the Sacred Narrative, a North (or N.E.) wind blew “all night” (uncovering the shoals

<sup>1</sup> Stephens's *Incidents of Travel*.



above the site of Suez). And in the “morning watch” (at two in the morning) the Sea returned. Thus not more than two or three hours seem to have been allotted for the passage of three millions of people. Within this time they might have hastened over the narrow arm, while to march the greater distance would have been impossible. The miracle consisted, not in the march of the people, but in the Divine direction of the wind; and the return of the waters at the command of Moses.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Biblical Researches, i. 83.





MAP  
to Illustrate  
THE ROUTE OF  
DAVID ROBERTS, ESQ. R.A.  
IN  
THE HOLY LAND, PETREA & SYRIA.

NOTE—The Route is indicated thus ————

NOTE—The Route is indicated thus: —

*Longitude East 33 from Greenwich*

















## DATE DUE

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Croly.

The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia,  
Egypt, and Nubia.



